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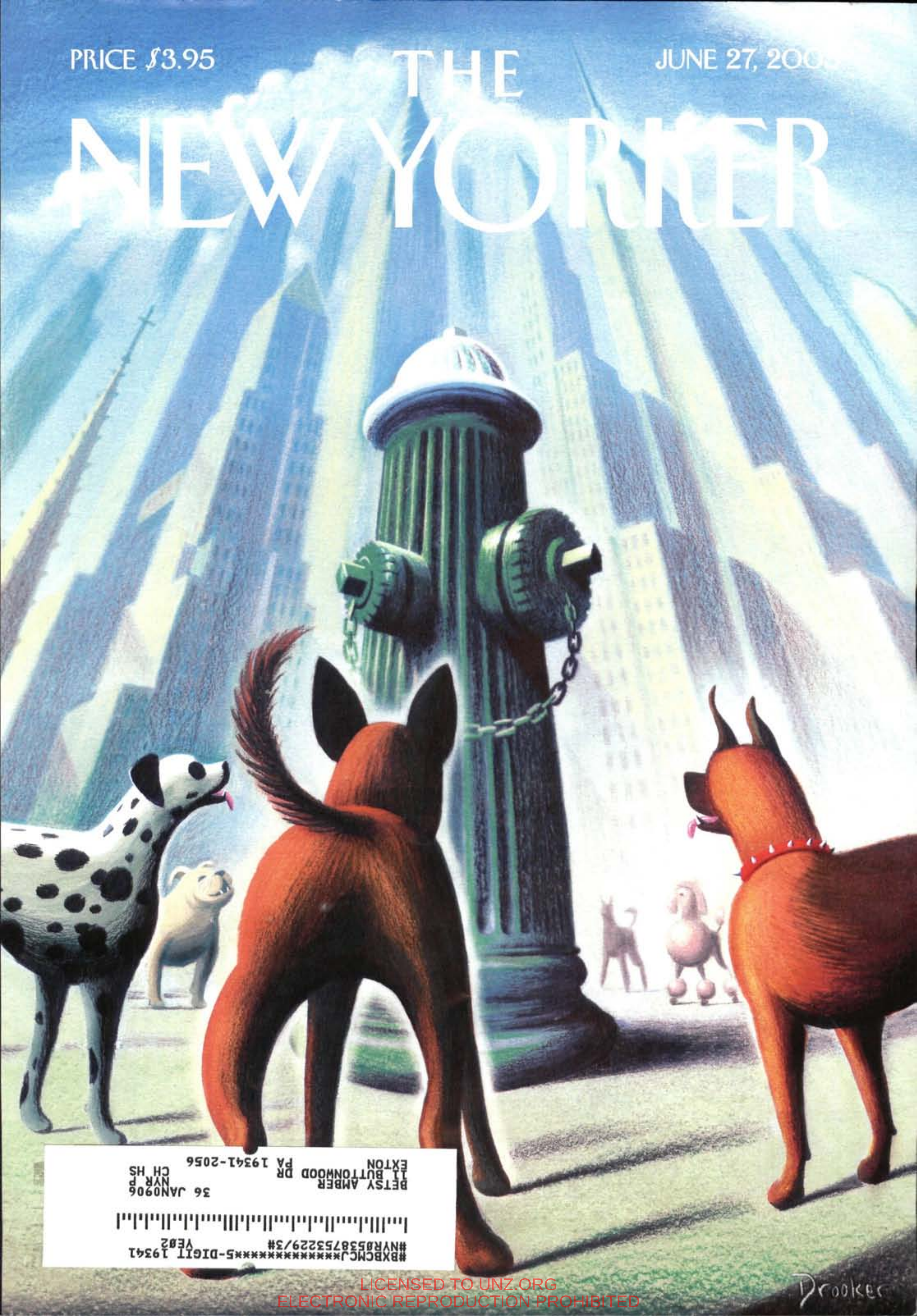
JUNE 27, 200



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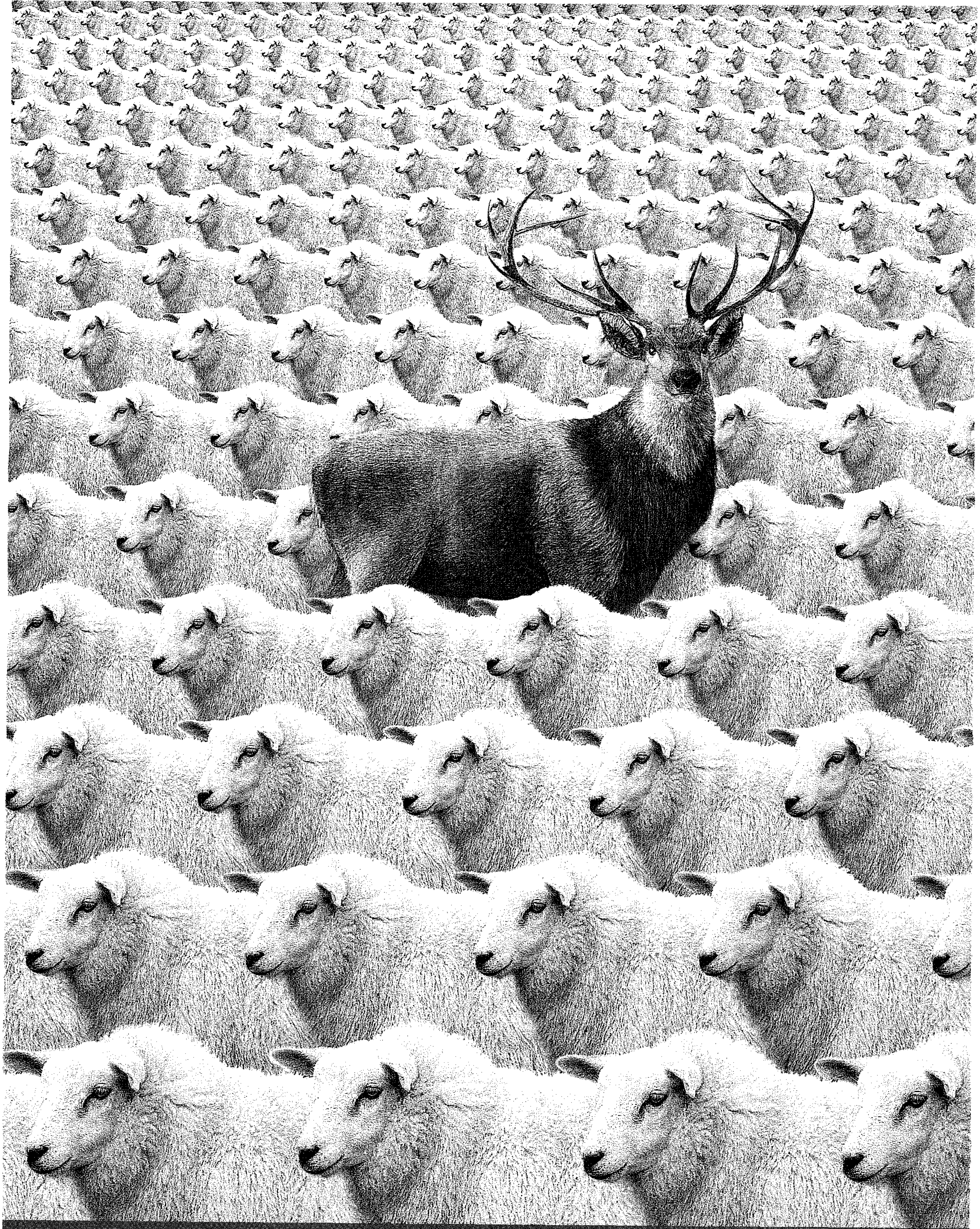

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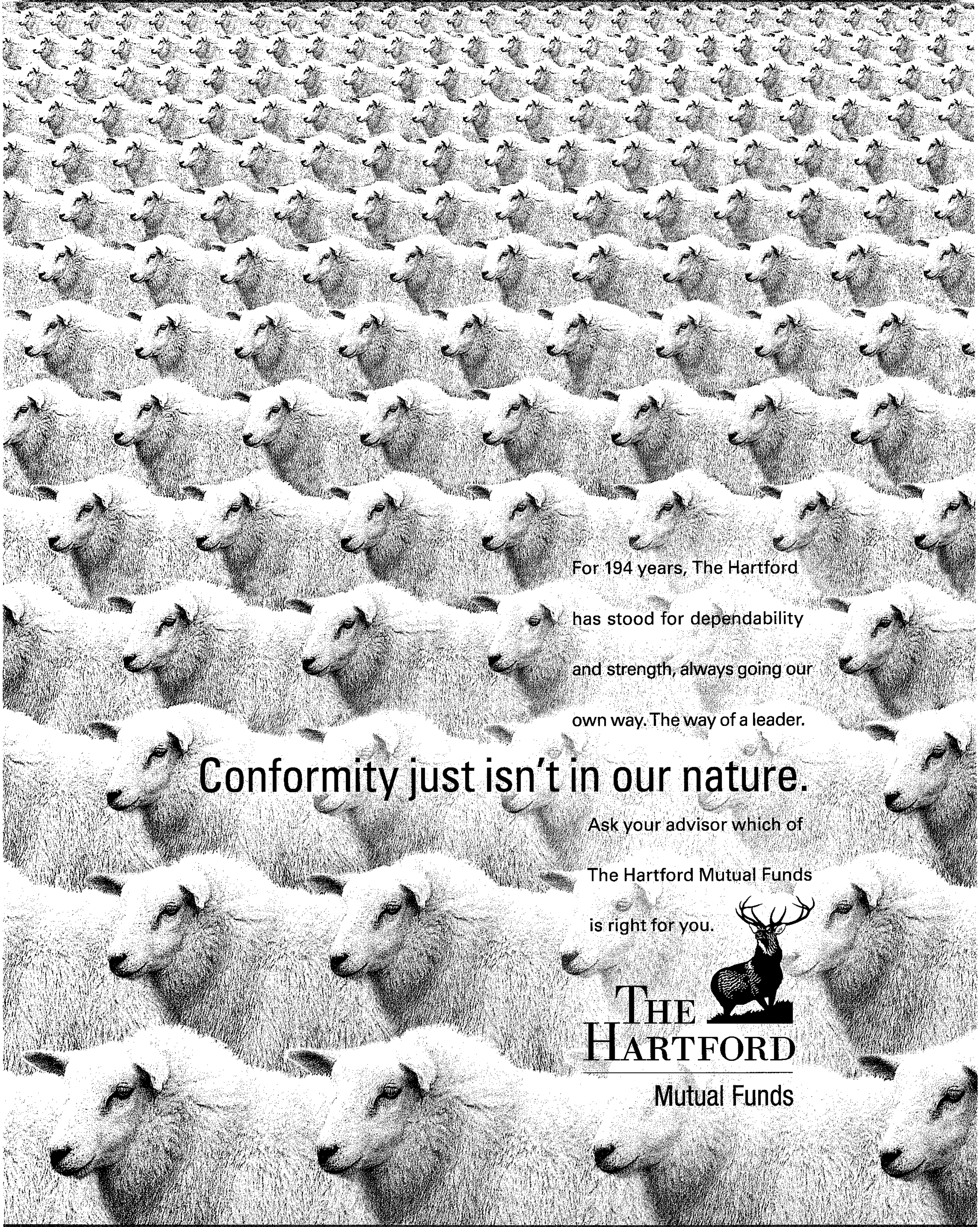
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to fade quietly
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Exhibit A.

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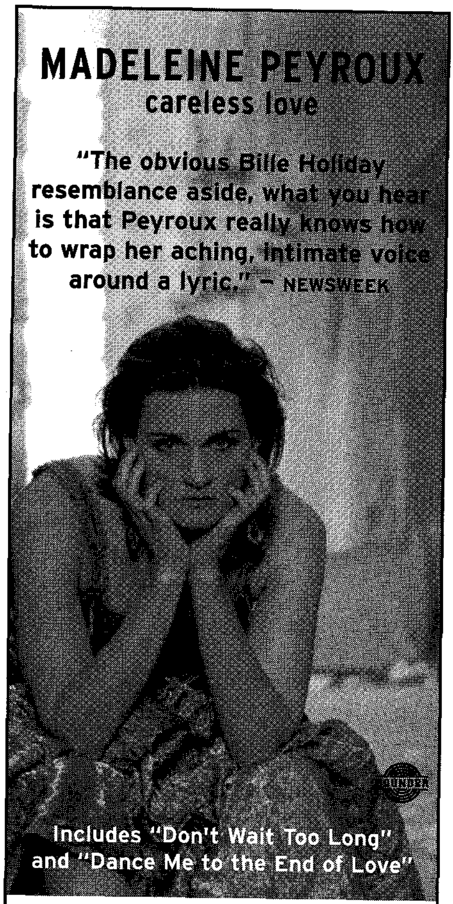
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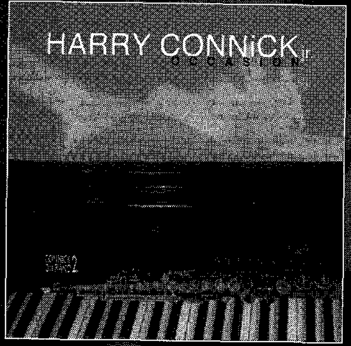
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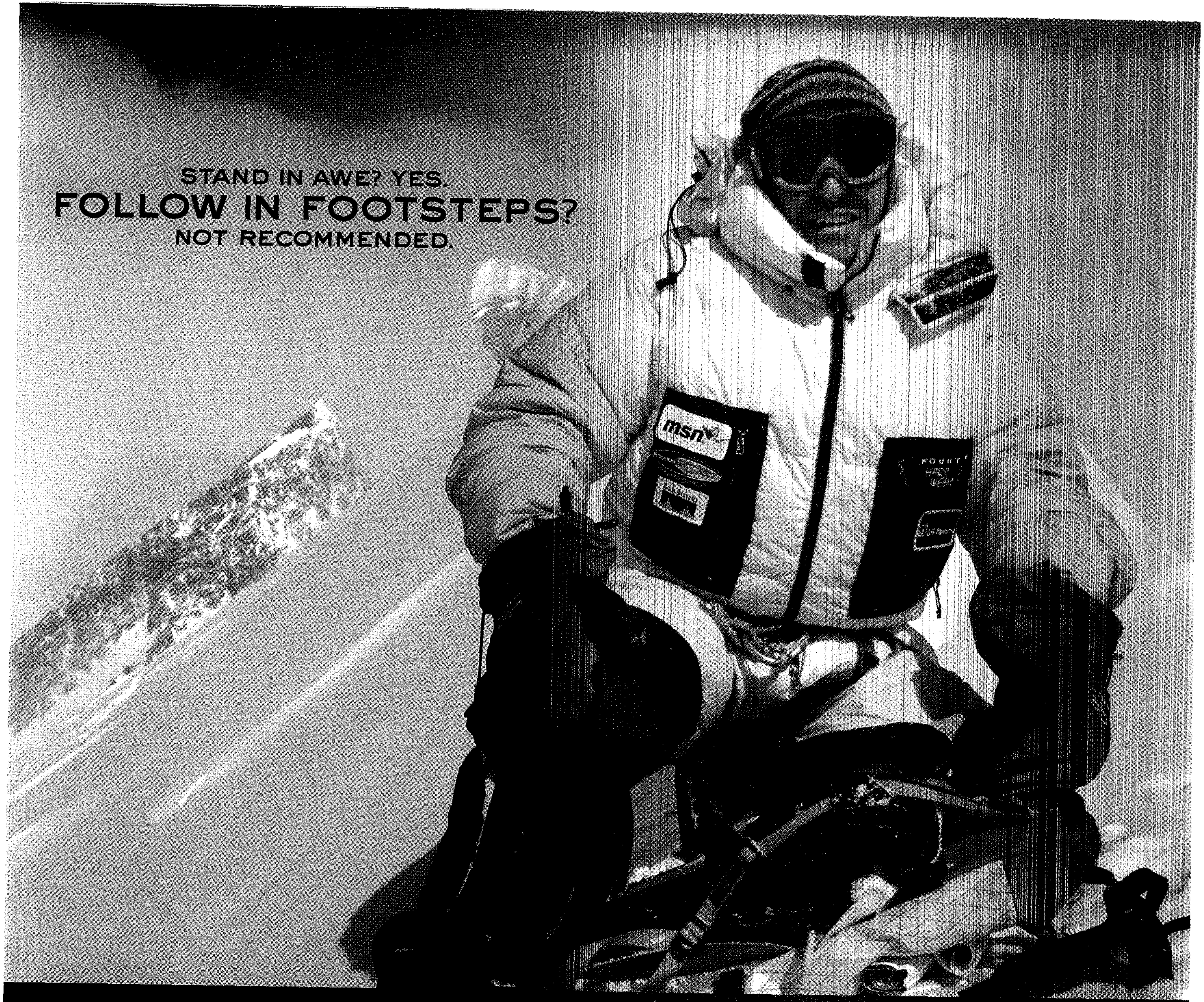
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FOLLOW IN FOOTSTEPS?
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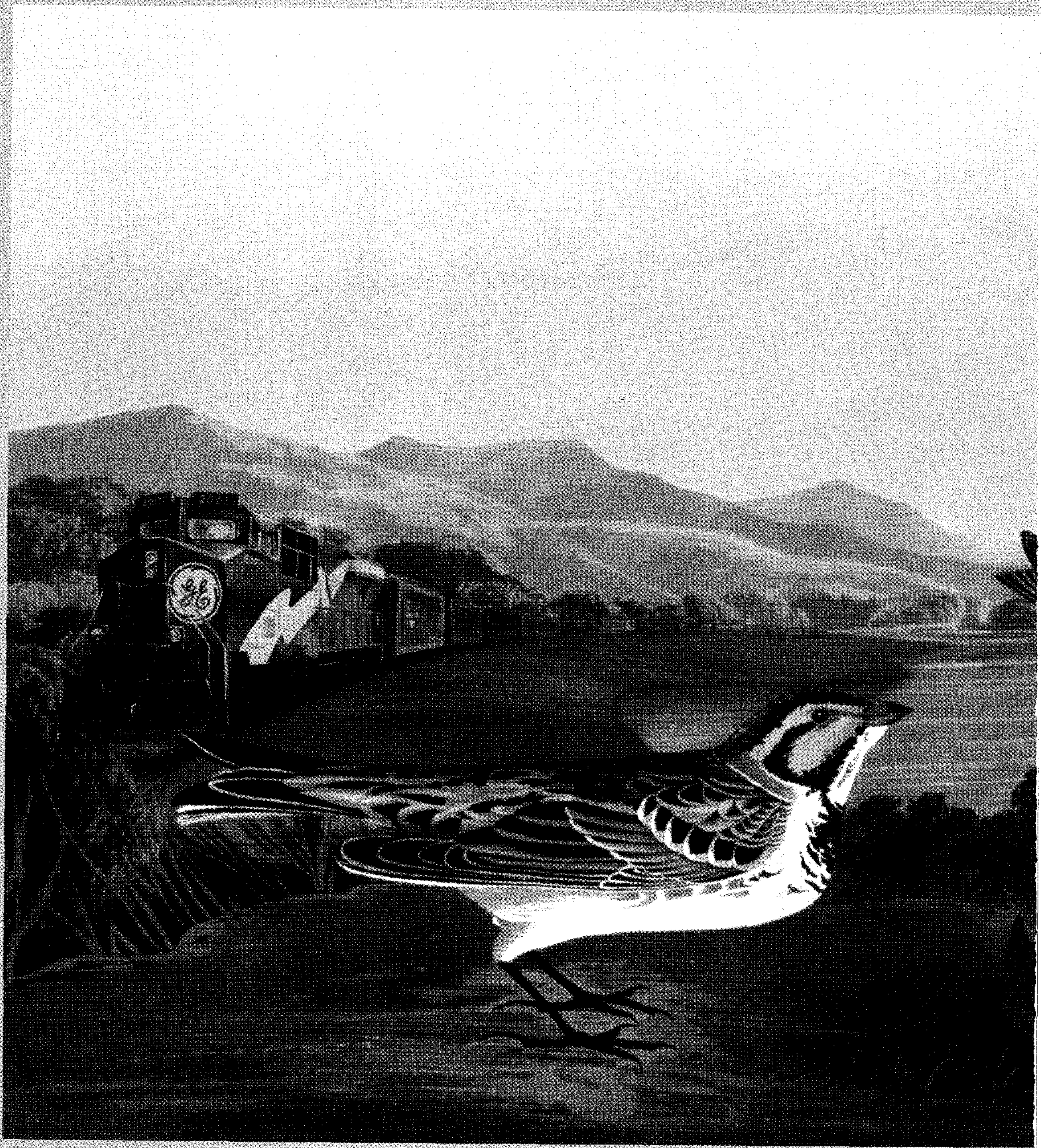

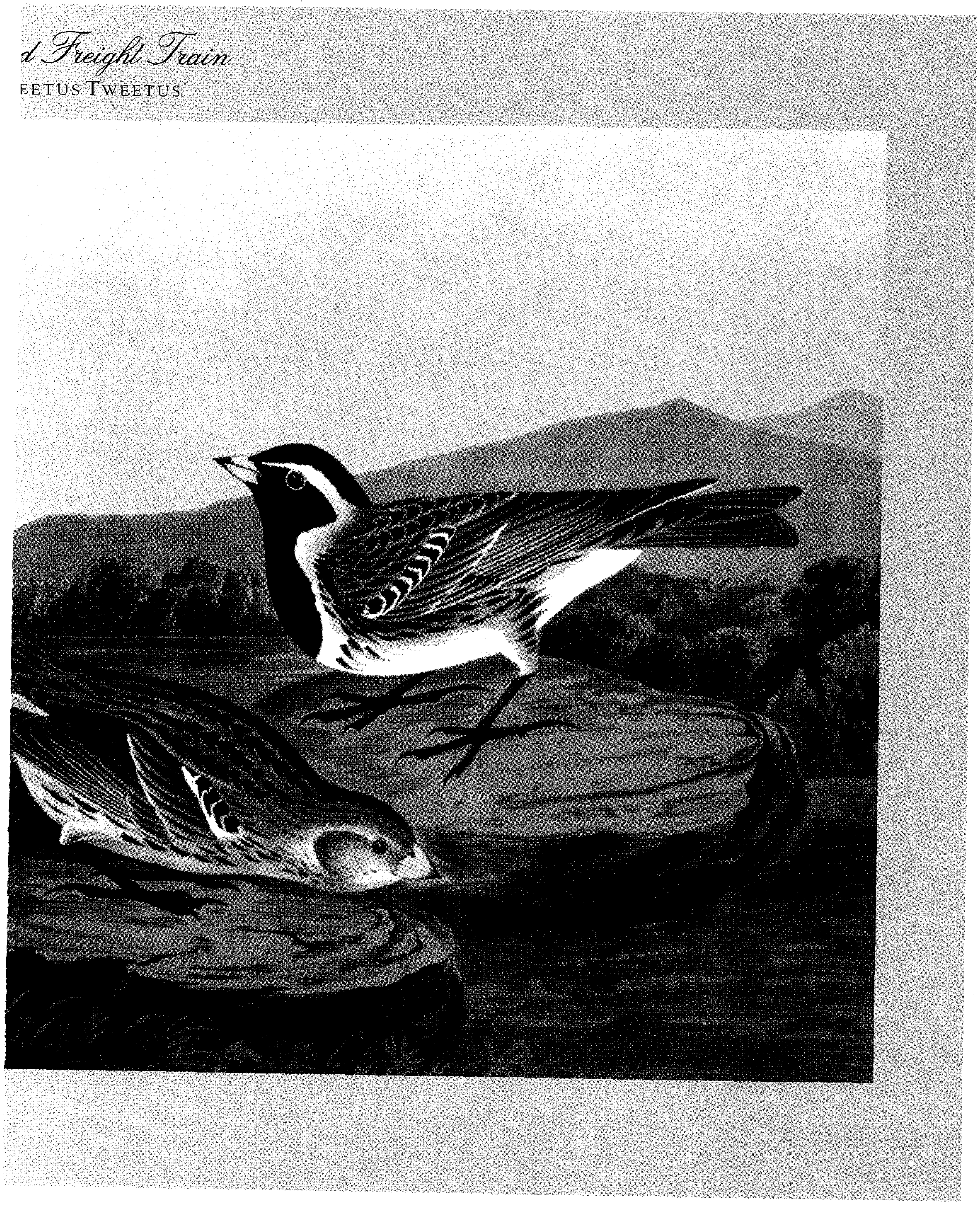
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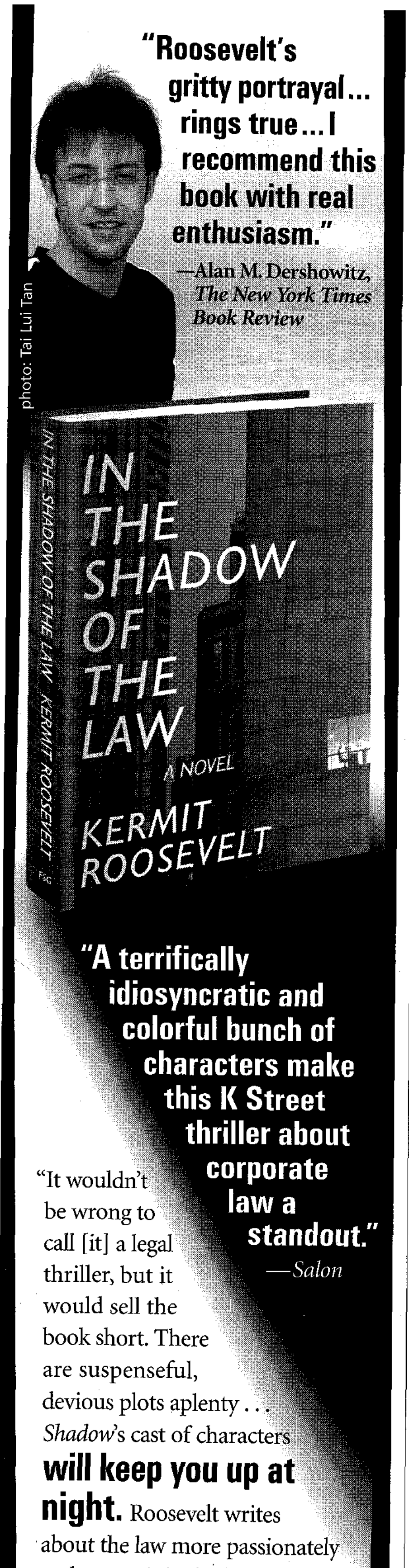

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CONTRIBUTORS

Jane Kramer ("Painting the Town," p. 50) writes the Letter from Europe for the magazine. Her recent books include "The Politics of Memory" and "Lone Patriot."

Hendrik Hertzberg (Comment, p. 33) is a senior editor and a staff writer. His book "Politics: Observations & Arguments" is available in paperback.

Nick Paumgarten (The Talk of the Town, p. 36) is an editor at the magazine.

Hanna Rosin ("God and Country," p. 44) is a staff writer at the Washington *Post*.

Roz Chast (Cartoon, p. 71) has been a contributor for more than twenty-five years. Her most recent book is "The Party, After You Left."

Eric Drooker (Cover) is an illustrator and the author of "Flood!" and "Blood Song," two novels told in pictures.

Alec Wilkinson ("The Crossing," p. 62) is a longtime contributor to *The New Yorker*.

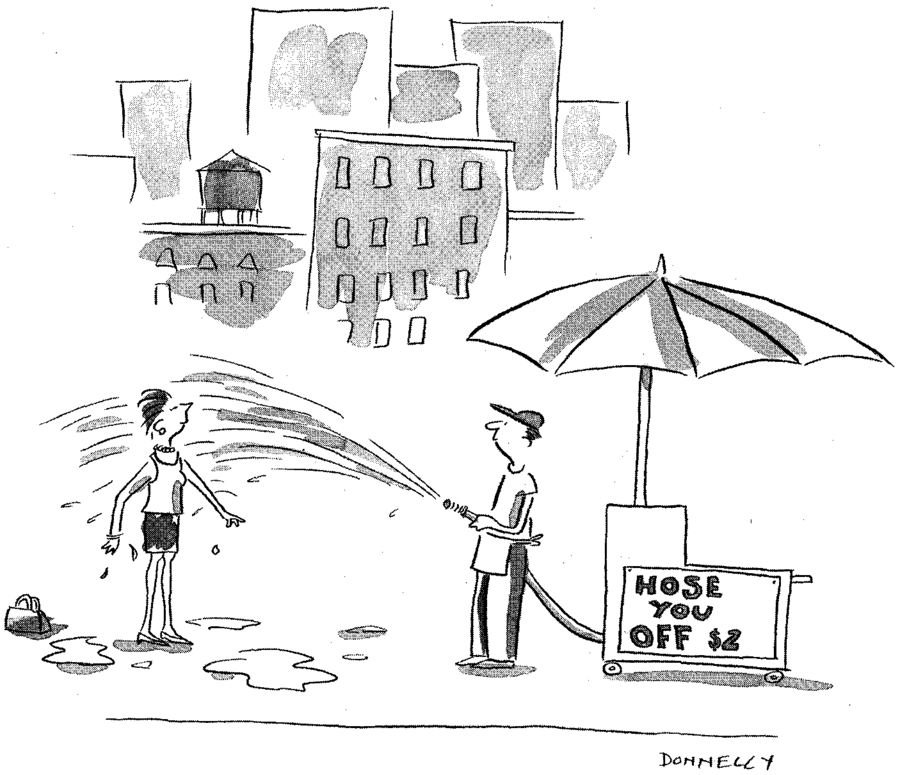
Chester Brown (Illustration, p. 62) is a cartoonist. His latest book is "Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography."

J. M. Coetzee (Fiction, p. 76) won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2003. He has published numerous works of fiction, including, most recently, "Elizabeth Costello." His new novel, "Slow Man," comes out in September.

Eliza Griswold (Poem, p. 80) reported on Waziristan for the magazine last year.

Louis Menand (Books, p. 92) is the author of "The Metaphysical Club" and "American Studies."

Robert Hass (Poem, p. 97) has published four poetry collections, including "Sun Under Wood." He also translated, with the author, Czeslaw Milosz's last collection, "Second Space: New Poems." ♦



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ROME IN AMERICA

As a Denver resident and a nun, I found the portrait of the Archbishop of Denver, Charles Chaput, in Peter J. Boyer's recent article accurate ("A Hard Faith," May 16th). Chaput seems to have surrounded himself with a band of merry yes-men. As for his "successful" seminaries, I suppose we must wait and see what kind of priests they turn out. However, a brief encounter I had with two fervent young seminarians before the November elections was worrisome. I was standing with some other nuns outside Bronco Stadium one day last fall with a large "Nuns for Kerry" sign. The seminarians accosted us, reacting with horror to our sign and telling us they were scandalized by our public stance. It appeared to us that Chaput's description of the seminary was all too accurate: "They love Jesus Christ. . . . And dissent is not part of that kind of love here." One wonders if Jesus, who knew a thing or two about dissent, would find this sad or funny.
Sister Mary Ann Cunningham
Denver, Colo.

As an assistant for part of Vatican II, and an old colleague of Father Charles Curran's, I rejoiced in the hope that Vatican II would change the "top-down" bureaucratic Church into a true people of God. But even back then the Curia said that when the council ended it would take back the Church. Pope John Paul II, for all his glorious worldwide achievements, was a top-down Pope, who lost sight of an important segment of the Catholic people. While he was Pope, a significant portion of American Catholics left their old ethnic, Catholic neighborhoods, got educated, and entered the wider American culture. They could have helped change the world. John Paul and the bishops he appointed, however, held on to the ghettoized culture of devotion and blind obedience. In their darkness, they blamed our American culture, while severely disregarding a maturing laity who, even now, are looking hard for leadership for truly meaningful prophetic action in today's society.
Anthony T. Massimini
Strasburg, Pa.

In his position as Prefect, one of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's roles was, as Boyer puts it, "framing the Pope's exclusion of women from the priesthood as infallible teaching." Now that Ratzinger is Pope, he may be in a position to shore up such infallibility by making an ex-cathedra statement. To date, no Pope has ever declared, ex cathedra, that women should not be priests, and no Pope has made any such declaration about abortion or euthanasia or about married priests. All these are matters of temporal controversy. If we could keep this straight, we would better understand the longevity of the Church, as well as its present distress.
M. J. Fitzgerald
Minneapolis, Minn.

Boyer's statement that John Paul II began his papacy on a "starkly different note" from that of his indirect predecessor John XXIII is in line with the common perception that the former was "liberal," hailed by progressives for convoking Vatican II, and that the latter was "conservative," decried by "progressives" for undermining Vatican II. Yet these reputations may be partly a matter of historical context. One wonders whether John XXIII, had he been exposed to our contemporary currents, would be any more lenient on the issues for which John Paul II and Benedict XVI have been most criticized—abortion, contraception, homosexuality, and the ordination of women. It seems highly unlikely.
Matthew Rubach
Tucson, Ariz.

Boyer quotes a communication sent in 2004 by Cardinal Ratzinger to Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, of Washington, which sets out our new Pope's position on the moral hierarchies surrounding the value of human life very clearly: "Not all moral issues have the same moral weight as abortion and euthanasia," Ratzinger wrote. "For example, if a Catholic were to be at odds with the Holy Father on the application of capital punishment or on the decision to wage war, he would not for that reason be considered unworthy to present himself to receive Holy Communion. . . . There may be a legitimate diversity of opinion even among Catholics about waging war and applying the death penalty but not, however, with regard to abortion and euthanasia." To place war's indiscriminate carnage on a higher moral plane than the compassionate ending of a life of overwhelming pain is shocking. Such an opinion reveals Benedict XVI as the perfect Pope for a nation such as ours—belligerent, anti-intellectual, and, it seems, increasingly uninterested in going to Mass.
Mark Sloan
Santa Rosa, Calif.

Boyer quotes the new Pope, Benedict XVI, as saying that "truth is not determined by a majority vote." While that's a nice line, doubtless delivered with a knowing smile, the Pope must know that the history of his own Church contains episodes that suggest otherwise. For instance, the doctrine that Jesus is from the same substance as God the Father (*homoousios*) was voted on at the First Council of Nicea, in 325. And this decision was not unanimous. Two bishops refused to sign the creed and were banished to Illyricum. After the council, another bishop retracted his support and yet another reinterpreted the creed to withhold some support. Furthermore, controversy over *homoousios* continued even once the vote had established it as a doctrinal truth.
Burt Wilson
Sacramento, Calif.

•

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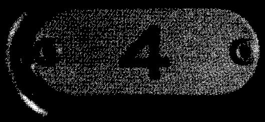

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Bambi the Mermaid, in Coney Island, Brooklyn. Photograph by Sylvia Plachy.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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26	27	28	22	23	24	25

THIS WEEK

THE THEATRE
THE LAST LAUGH

The parodic revue "Forbidden Broadway" has sent up the backstage high jinks and duelling egos of New York's theatre scene for two decades. Though the show took a break last month, when its longtime house, the Douglas Fairbanks Theatre, was demolished, the mayhem resumes on June 24 at the 47th Street Theatre, with new material that includes tributes to "Sweet Charity," "Monty Python's Spamalot," and "The Light in the Piazza." (See page 16.)

NIGHT LIFE
EMILIANA TORRINI

Despite her Italian name, Torrini was raised in Iceland and now lives in England. Her most recent album, "Fisherman's Woman," shows her practicing a brand of skeletal electronic folk that has earned her international acclaim. This week, she'll perform a pair of shows at Joe's Pub. (See page 18.)

ART
NEW YORK'S PAST

Four hundred years of New York history are compressed into a twenty-two-minute presentation of morphing maps, images, and narration in the new three-screen installation "Timescapes," at the Museum of the City of New York. It's an absorbing biography of the city, neatly organized into chapters that outline the city's explosion out into its five boroughs, up into skyscrapers, and down into the subway system. (See page 21.)

DANCE
DREAM ON

New York City Ballet ends its spring season with Balanchine's "Midsummer Night's Dream," the first original evening-length ballet he created in this country and the first work performed in N.Y.C.B.'s début repertory season, at New York State Theatre in 1964. (See page 22.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
BARGEMUSIC

The pianist Jeffrey Swann offers an entire weekend of music by Franz Liszt that will explore the extremes of Romanticism's most expansive and elusive personality; the programs include such works as "Funérailles," the "Mephisto Waltzes," and the Sonata in B Minor. (See page 24.)

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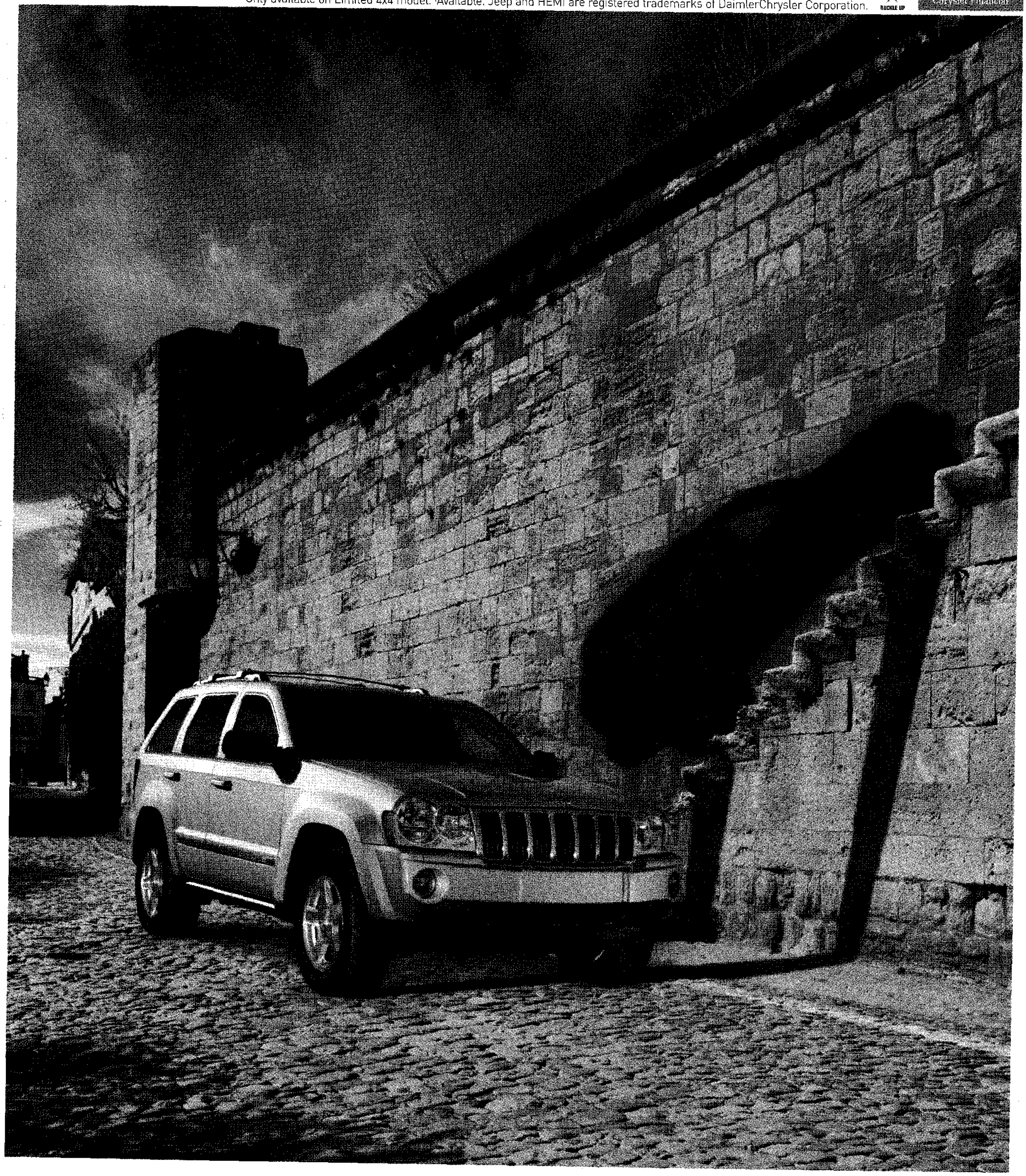

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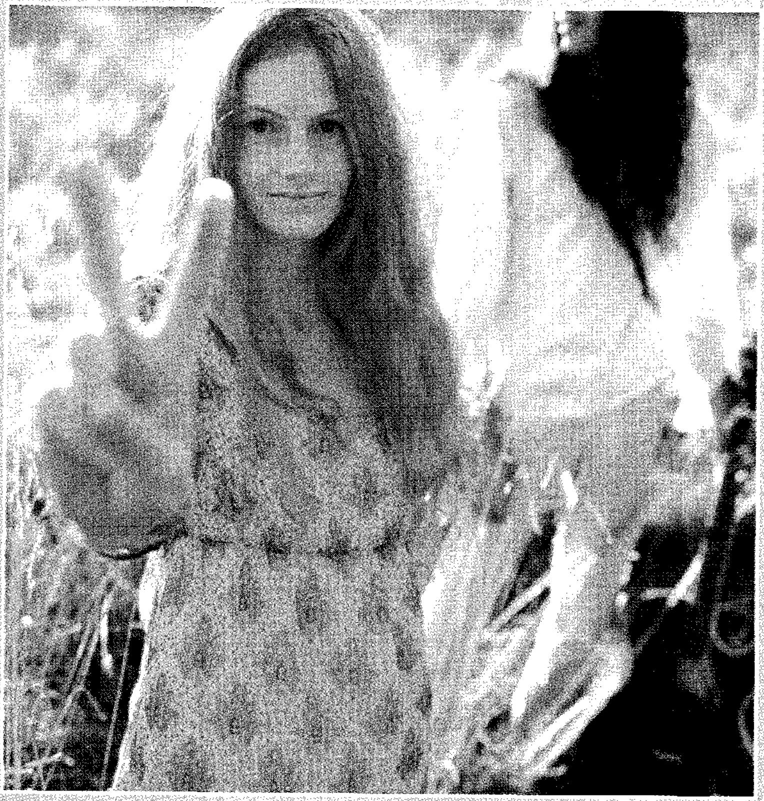

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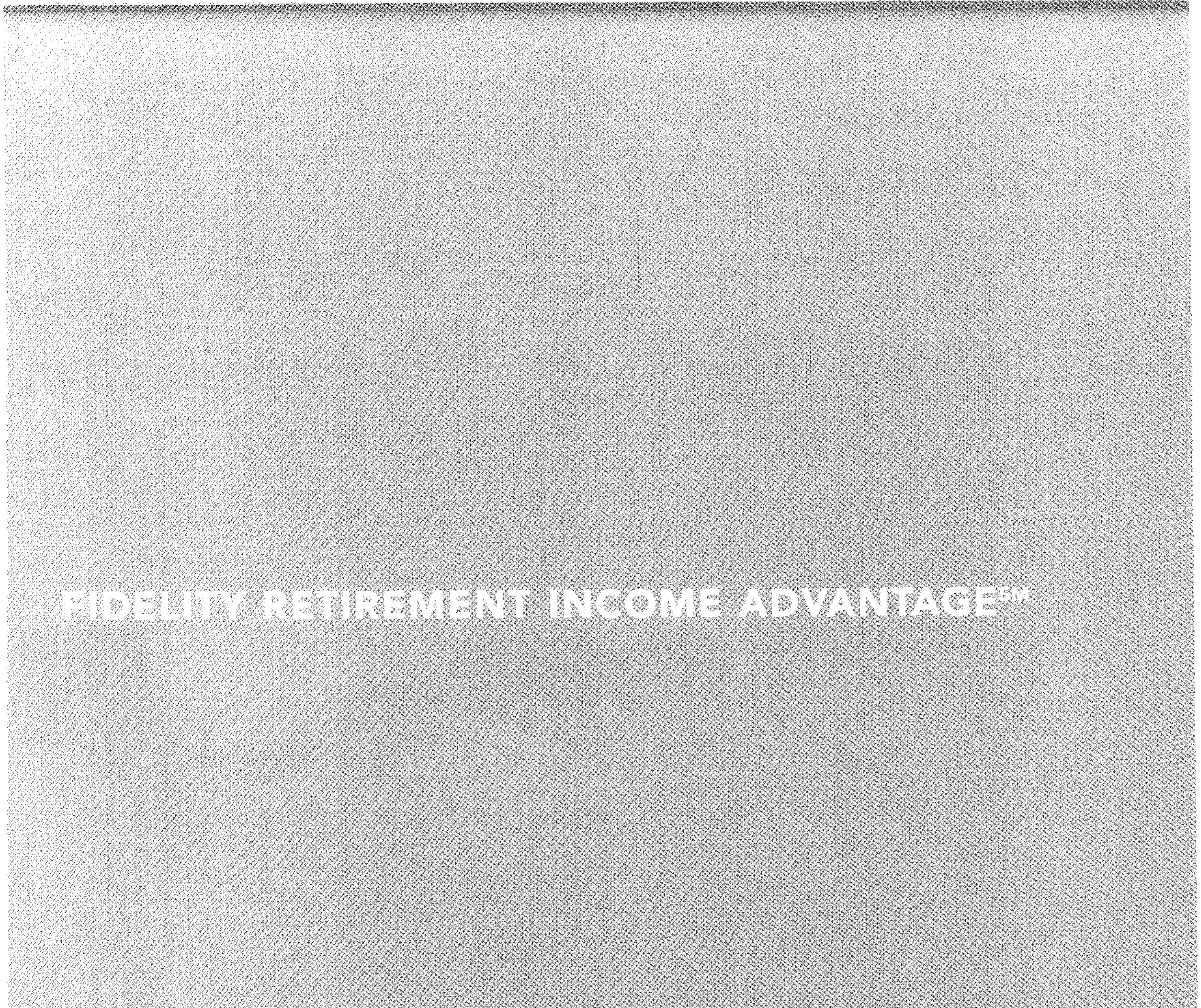

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THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

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BIRDIE BLUE
A new play about love, marriage, and time by Cheryl L. West stars S. Epatha Merkerson, Charles Weldon, and Billy Porter. Seret Scott directs. Two previews on June 22. Opens June 23 at 6:45. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

FOOLS IN LOVE
In a production conceived by Sarah Rosenberg and Louis Reyes Cardenas, Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream" is set in a fifties diner, accompanied by jukebox hits like "Stop! In the Name of Love," "Big Girls Don't Cry," and "Leader of the Pack." Two previews on June 22. Opens June 23 at 7:30. (Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, 55 Mercer St. 212-239-6200.)

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT
The long-running satirical revue of current and recent Broadway shows and stars has moved to a new theatre. Directed by Gerard Alessandrini and Phillip George. Performances begin June 24. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

POWERHOUSE SEASON
Last year, the Vassar summer theatre festival more than earned its name, presenting John Patrick Shanley's Tony-winning "Doubt" and Alexandra Gersten-Vassilaros's "The Argument." This season begins with the première of "The Man in the White Suit," by Greg Kotis and Mark Hollmann ("Urinetown"), which is based on the Ealing Studio comedy about a man who invents an indestructible fabric. June 24-26. Other offerings include a musical about Charlie Chaplin and a new drama by Shanley, "Chain of Command." For a full festival schedule, visit www.powerhouse.vassar.edu. (Poughkeepsie, N.Y. 845-437-5599. Through July 31.)

SWIMMING IN THE SHALLOWS
Logan Marshall-Green, of "The O.C.," stars in a new play by Adam Bock, about friends who commiserate at the local aquarium about their love troubles. Trip Cullman directs. In previews. Opens June 28 at 7. Part of the Second Stage Theatre Uptown summer series. (McGinn/Cazale, Broadway at 76th St. 212-246-4422.)

TWELFTH NIGHT
The Aquila Theatre Company presents a ten-week run of the Shakespeare comedy, conceived and directed by Peter Meineck and Robert Richmond and featuring original music by Anthony Cochrane. In previews. Opens June 25 at 8. (Baruch Performing Arts Center, 55 Lexington Ave., between 24th and 25th Sts. 212-279-4200.)

NOW PLAYING

AFTER THE NIGHT AND THE MUSIC
Three one-acters by Elaine May appear under a collective title. In "Curtain Raiser," the first and most exuberant of them, May dramatizes issues of trust and daring. Keith (Eddie Korbich), a pudgy sad sack in a dance hall, asks Gloria (J. Smith-Cameron), a severe-looking barfly dressed all in black, for a dance. "I'm gay. I don't dance well. And I can only lead," she responds. "It doesn't matter to me who leads and who follows," Keith says. "I'll improvise—you'll look magnificent." The evening's other two plays—"Swing Time," a scathing attack on petit-bourgeois morality, and "Giving Up Smoking," a series of linked neurotic monologues—are less successful. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/13 & 20/05.) (Biltmore, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200. Closes July 3.)

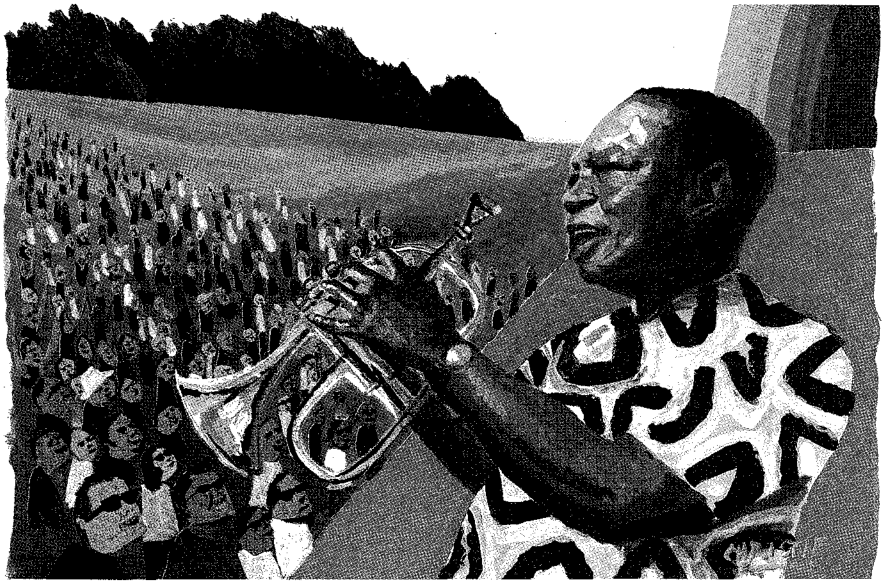
BORDER/CLASH: A LITANY OF DESIRES
Def Poetry Jam's Staceyann Chin presents a one-woman autobiographical play about her life as a Jamaican-born New Yorker. Directed by Rob Urbinati. (The Culture Project, 45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.)

BRITS OFF BROADWAY
A superb six-member cast performs Alan Ayckbourn's moody, intricate drama "Private Fears in Public Places," about the frayed intimacy between several sets of people of different social classes (a middle-aged brother and sister, a barman and his regular customer, a posh woman and her fiancé, a receptionist and her colleague) whose lives overlap in unpredictable ways. Three other plays also run on the many stages of 59E59: "Jackson's Way," Will Adamsdale's comic one-man show about an American motivational speaker, "Faster," presented by Filter Theatre, about the modern obsession with speed, and Stewart Permutt's "Unsuspecting Susan," starring Celia Imrie ("Calendar Girls"). (59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200. Through July 3.)

THE CHERRY ORCHARD
Chekhov's classic drama, in a new adaptation by Tom Donaghy, comes to the Atlantic Theatre. Scott Zigler directs. (Reviewed in this issue.) (336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE CONSTANT WIFE
The Roundabout Theatre Company presents Somerset Maugham's comedy, set in London in the twenties, about a straying husband, a scheming wife, and their urbane circle of friends. Mark Brokaw directs a sparkling cast, led by Lynn Redgrave, Kate Burton, Kathryn Meisle, and Michael Cumpsty. (Reviewed in this issue.) (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.)

HECUBA
Vanessa Redgrave is the tragic queen in the Royal Shakespeare Company production of Euripides' play, in a new adaptation by the British poet Tony Harrison, now playing at BAM's Howard Gilman Opera House. (30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Through June 26.)



The trumpeter Hugh Masekela lights up Celebrate Brooklyn! on June 23.

R. GREGORY CHRISTIE

THE LIGHT IN THE PIAZZA
This lovely and complicated musical by Craig Lucas (book) and Adam Guettel (music and lyrics) is based on Elizabeth Spencer's novella about a Southern lady who takes Clara, her beautiful but intellectually impaired daughter, to Florence, where she stumbles into a love affair. Clara is played by the clear-voiced Kelli O'Hara with just the right mix of guilelessness and passion; Victoria Clark, a genteel powerhouse, plays her mother, who struggles with her conscience as her daughter fights for her right to love. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

MANUSCRIPT
Marin Ireland ("Sabina," "4:48 Psychosis"), Jeffrey Carlson, and Pablo Schreiber star in a comedy by Paul Grellong, about three people who hope that an enchanted manuscript will bring them fame. Directed by Bob Balaban. (Daryl Roth, 101 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200.)

MARK TWAIN TONIGHT!
This evening of sage and spiky off-the-cuff anecdotes and aperçus by the Missouri-born philosopher Samuel Clemens, delivered by Hal Holbrook—who has channelled the author onstage since 1954—furnishes more familiar saws than the Book of Proverbs. On child-rearing, Twain said: "Insanity is inherited; we get it from our children." On politics, he declared: "In all matters of opinion, our adversaries are insane." And on fitness: "Whenever I get the urge to exercise, I lie down until the feeling passes." Each program is different; each night Holbrook chooses which of dozens of well-rehearsed riffs to string together. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 212-307-4100. Through June 26.)

THE PARIS LETTER
A Wall Street macher is dogged by secrets from his past, in the New York première of a play by Jon Robin Baitz, presented by the Roundabout Theatre Company. John Glover, Michele Pawk, and Ron Rifkin lead the cast. Directed by Doug Hughes. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300.)

THE TALK OF THE TOWN
The Peccadillo Theatre Company's brisk and clever play about the wits who gathered at the Algonquin Round Table in the twenties, featuring well-crafted period-style songs by Ginny Redington and Tom Dawes, plays every Monday night this summer in the hotel's Oak Room. (59 W. 44th St. 212-840-6800.)

TERRORISM
This smart, saturnine meditation on terror, written by the Siberian brothers Oleg and Vladimir Presnyakov, captures the chilly, demoralized internal climate that fear creates in the mind and shows how, in a world tipped upside down by terror, suspicion erodes the bonds between people and undermines the community. The play is structured as a sort of existential murder mystery. In six linked scenes, as the sadism of individuals and the group is slowly revealed, concrete slabs, which at first suggest barriers erected to keep terror out, become a metaphor for the walls of hatred and isolation that keep the terrorized self in. Crisply directed by Will Frears. (6/6/05) (Theatre Row, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. Closes June 26.)

THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE
The wracking tension of spelling-bee competition is turned into rollicking ironic fun in this musical by William Finn ("Falsettos") and Rachel Sheinkin, in which each speller hams up the role of a different school-yard stereotype. Directed by James Lapine. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 212-239-6200.)

OUT OF TOWN

HUDSON VALLEY SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL
Through the poles of the tented outdoor stage at the Boscobel Restoration, theatregoers can see the lush

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CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
LOVE AND LIGHT

Adam Guettel's sumptuous romantic score for "The Light in the Piazza," which won a Tony earlier this month, is one of the pillars of the musical, which tells the story of an American mother who allows her brain-damaged daughter to have a chance at married life with a young Florentine. "We all identify with the sense of inadequacy which is so brought into relief by the experience of falling in love," Guettel said. His work for "Piazza"—he wrote both the music and the lyrics—marks an important departure from the boulevard nihilism that has dominated the musical form for the last couple of decades. "*M'inonda* is the Italian for 'I am inundated, I am suffused,'" Guettel said. "That word represents what I'm going for: to create the sound of *m'inonda*, of being inundated with hope and relief. I wanted to give voice to the internal arias and reachings, those flights of the heart that I've had for romantic completion. It can happen anywhere, even around a dinner table with nine other people who are discussing Ann Coulter." He added, "God, I'm never gonna get a date if you put any of this in there."

—*John Lahr*

KIM DEMARCO

trees of the Palisades and the glint of the Hudson. Now playing is "The Tempest," directed by Terrence O'Brien. (Cold Spring, N.Y. For more information, visit hvshakespeare.org. 845-265-9575.)

RAGTIME
Stafford Arima's London staging of the musical by Terrence McNally (book), Stephen Flaherty (music), and Lynn Ahrens (lyrics), based on the novel by E. L. Doctorow, comes to the Paper Mill Playhouse. (Milburn, N.J. 973-376-4343.)

Also Playing

ALL SHOOK UP: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-307-4100. **ALTAR BOYZ:** Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200. **AVENUE Q:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **BEAST ON THE MOON:** Century Center for the Performing Arts, 111 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200. **CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG:** Hilton, 213 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100. **DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **DOUBT:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200. **DRUMSTRUCK:** Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200. **FIDDLER ON THE ROOF:** Minskoff, 200 W. 45th St. 212-307-4100. **THE GLASS MENAGERIE:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS:** Bernard B. Jacobs, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **HURLYBURLY:** 37 Arts, 450 W. 37th St. 212-307-4100. (Closes July 2.) **LAZER VAUDEVILLE:** Lamb's Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **MAMMA MIA!:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-563-5544. **MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **ON GOLDEN POND:** Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200. **ORSON'S SHADOW:** Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-239-6200. **THE PILLOWMAN:** Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE:** Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-719-1300. **SWEET CHARITY:** Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **THOM PAIN (BASED ON NOTHING):** DR2, 103 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200. **WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?:** Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200. **WICKED:** Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100.

NIGHT LIFE
ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BEACON THEATRE
Broadway at 74th St. (212-307-7171)—June 26-27: **Robert Plant.** Since disbanding Led Zeppelin following the death of the drummer John Bonham, in 1980, the prototypical rock god has pursued a conflicted solo career that alternately embraced and renounced the legacy of his former outfit. With his new ensemble, the Strange Sensation, Plant recorded his latest album, "The Mighty Rearranger," in which he indulges in his tastes for North African modalities and old-school rock pageantry.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—June 22: Good golly, Miss Molly, it's **Little Richard.** June 23: The neo-soul singer **Angie Stone.** June 26: Just in case its name doesn't tip you off, **Hate Eternal** is a death-metal band. June 27-28: **Pat Benatar** is synonymous with middle-of-the-road album-oriented rock of the early eighties, but she has a voice that can drown out any naysayer. Benatar may have mellowed with age, but she still projects the toughness that made her famous. She has her husband, the guitarist **Neil Geraldo,** by her side here.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—June 24: **Eisley,** a precocious quintet of siblings from Texas whose epic-sounding songs sound like a cross between the Cardigans and Coldplay.

CELEBRATE BROOKLYN!
Prospect Park Band Shell, Prospect Park W. at 9th St. (718-855-7882, ext. 45)—June 23: **Hugh Masekela.** It's been more than three decades since "Grazing in the Grass" was No. 1 on the R. & B. charts, but the great trumpeter still has the same deliciously delicate touch. Following the show, another top South African artist, **William Kentridge,** takes the stage to introduce "9 Drawings for Projection," a screening of all his short animated films, accompanied by live music. June 24: Ever since its founding, in 1999, the New York trio **Soulive** has concentrated on two things: jamming and touring, which delights their fans, who dance to their mash of jazz, funk, soul, and hip-hop. With the jam-band-influenced **Antibalas Afrobeat Orchestra.** June 25: The Canadian bands the **New Pornographers** (power pop), the **Stars** (indie rock), and the **Sadies** (a little bit country, a little bit indie rock).

CENTRAL PARK SUMMERSTAGE
Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. (212-360-2777)—June 24: **Cassandra Wilson,** the most influential jazz singer of her generation, brings her genre-bending style to Central Park. June 25: The Official Central Park SummerStage 20th Anniversary Dance Party, with **Tortured Soul, Lady Alma,** and **Rich Medina.** June 26: Another invasion from Canada, with the twin sisters **Tegan and Sara,** the singer-songwriter **Ron Sexsmith,** and the teen-age blue-eyed-soul prodigy **Kyle Riabko.**

HIRO BALLROOM
The Maritime Hotel, 363 W. 16th St. (212-727-0212)—June 28: **Annie,** a Norwegian singer with a breathy voice that reaches into the high registers and an airy pop sensibility that reaches back to the mechanical beats of the early eighties. She recently set the U.K. charts ablaze with her Richard X-produced single "Chewing Gum," but she's appearing here with Timo Kaukolampi, the producer who helped turn her début album, "Anniemal," into an instant dance-party staple.

HOUSING WORKS USED BOOK CAFÉ
126 Crosby St. (212-334-3324)—June 24: The folkish ensemble the **Wingdale Community Singers** are the novelist Rick Moody and the musicians Hannah Marcus and David Grubbs. They have a self-titled new album of earthy songs that they deliver with an urban wink and nod—their name comes from the upstate town that's known for its massive psychiatric hospital.

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—June 22-23: **Emiliana Torrini** sounds like the name of a delicious pasta, but it actually belongs to an Icelandic singer (she's half Italian) from a small town outside of Reykjavík. She co-wrote Kylie Minogue's hit "Slow," but her own material leans more toward sparse introspection. Her new release, "Fisherman's Woman," is a carefully knit black lace shawl of loss. Later on June 22: The exceptional Cuban guitarist **Juan-Carlos Formell.**

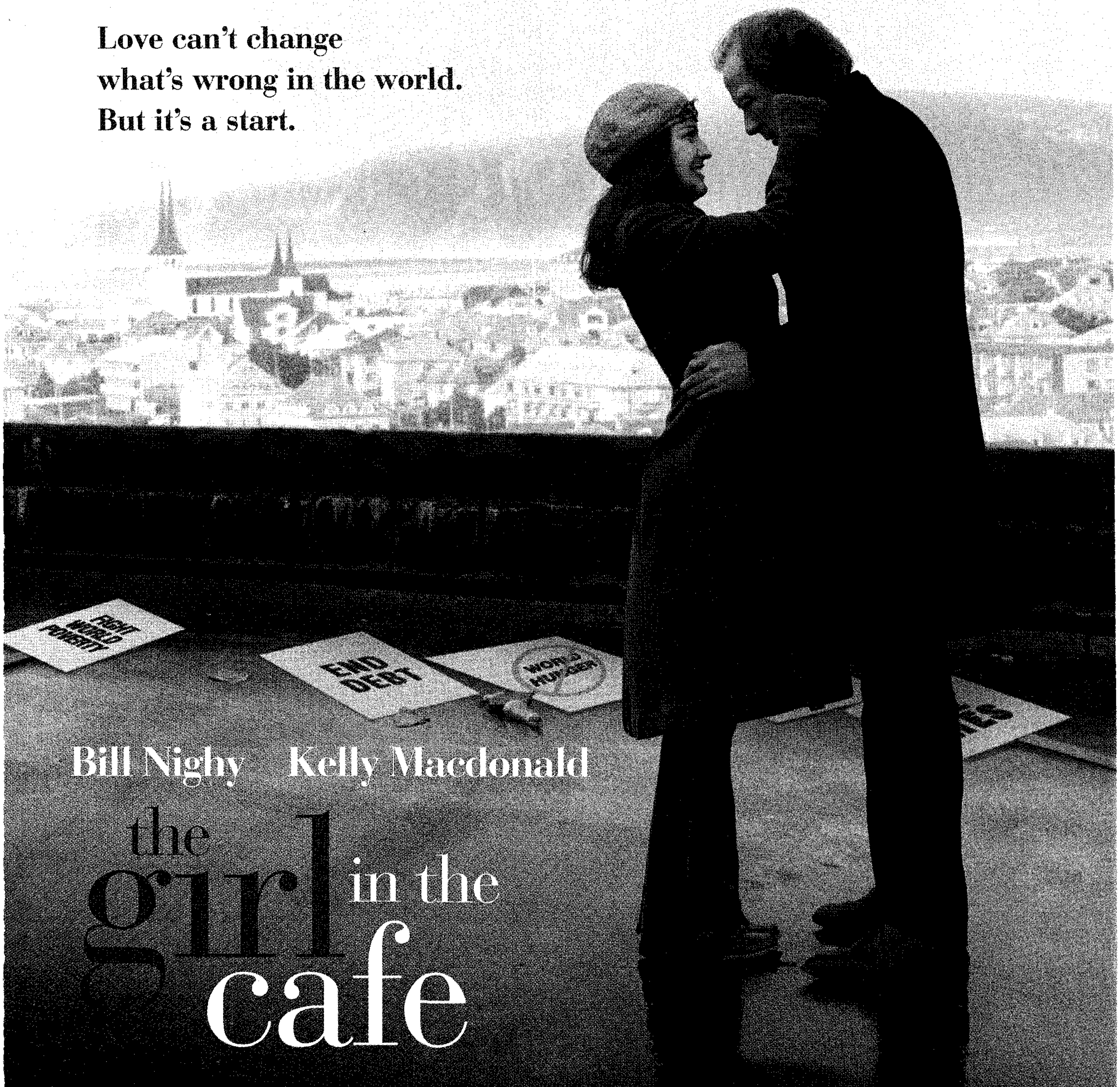
MAKOR
35 W. 67th St. (212-601-1000)—Thursdays this month: **Queen Esther.** A veteran of Broadway and the bands of Hubert Sumlin and James (Blood) Ulmer and now a regular member of the JC Hopkins Biggish Band, this powerhouse singer calls her mix of early rock and roll and country music "black Americana."

MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700)—June 27: The gritty roots rocker **Shannon McNally** celebrates the release of her latest CD, "Geronimo." June 28: **20 Miles,** the surprisingly melodic back-porch rock group led by Judah Bauer, the guitarist for the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion. June 29: Robert Plant himself is in town earlier in the week (see Beacon Theatre); that should furnish extra inspiration for the all-girl tribute band **Lez Zeppelin,** which douses the Plant-Page repertoire with estrogen.

"MIDSUMMER NIGHT SWING"
Fountain Plaza, Lincoln Center (212-721-6500)—The alfresco dancing continues on June 21 with the swinging sounds of the **Stardusters Big Band,** followed by the disco flamboyance of the **Village People** (June 22), the samba and forró of **Grupo Jangada** (June 23), the zydeco of **Terrance Simien** (June 24), and the salsa of **Pucho** and his **Latin Soul Brothers** (June 25). Through July 16.

NUBLU
62 Avenue C, between 4th and 5th Sts. (212-979-9925)—The smoking East Village music space celebrates its third anniversary and the launch of its own record label with a weeklong celebration. Such club

From the writer of **LOVE ACTUALLY, NOTTING HILL** and **FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL**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END DEBT
WORLD HUNGER
Bill Nighy Kelly Macdonald
the girl in the cafe

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regulars as **Butch Morris** (June 20), the **Brazilian Girls** (June 21), and **Forró in the Dark** (June 23) will be in attendance. The festival continues through June 26.

SATALLA
37 W. 26th St. (212-576-1155)—June 22 and June 29: The thorny folk troubadour and one-man punk band **Hamell on Trial.** June 23: **Brave Combo** turns out polkas and more.

TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503)—June 23: Two local Afro-beat bands serve up music to make the body move. **Asiko** harkens back to Fela Kuti's sound of the nineteen-seventies and shares his interest in politics. Also on the bill is the **Akoya Afrobeat Ensemble,** which actually has ties to the father of Afro-beat: its lead vocalist, Kaleta, performed for ten years with Fela.

WEBSTER HALL
125 E. 11th St. (212-353-1600)—June 25: **John Hiatt** travelled to Memphis and teamed up with the producer Jim Dickinson and his sons Cody and Luther (of the **North Mississippi Allstars,** who will open the show with an acoustic set and then back Hiatt) for his latest album, "Master of Disaster." June 27-28: **Billy Corgan,** the man behind the Smashing Pumpkins and, fleetingly, Zwan, is now giving his megalomaniacal impulses free rein with a solo career. His new album is "TheFutureEmbrace."

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—The singer **Abbey Lincoln** (here June 23-26) is a jazz survivor with a biting delivery whose most stirring repertoire turns out to be her own songs.

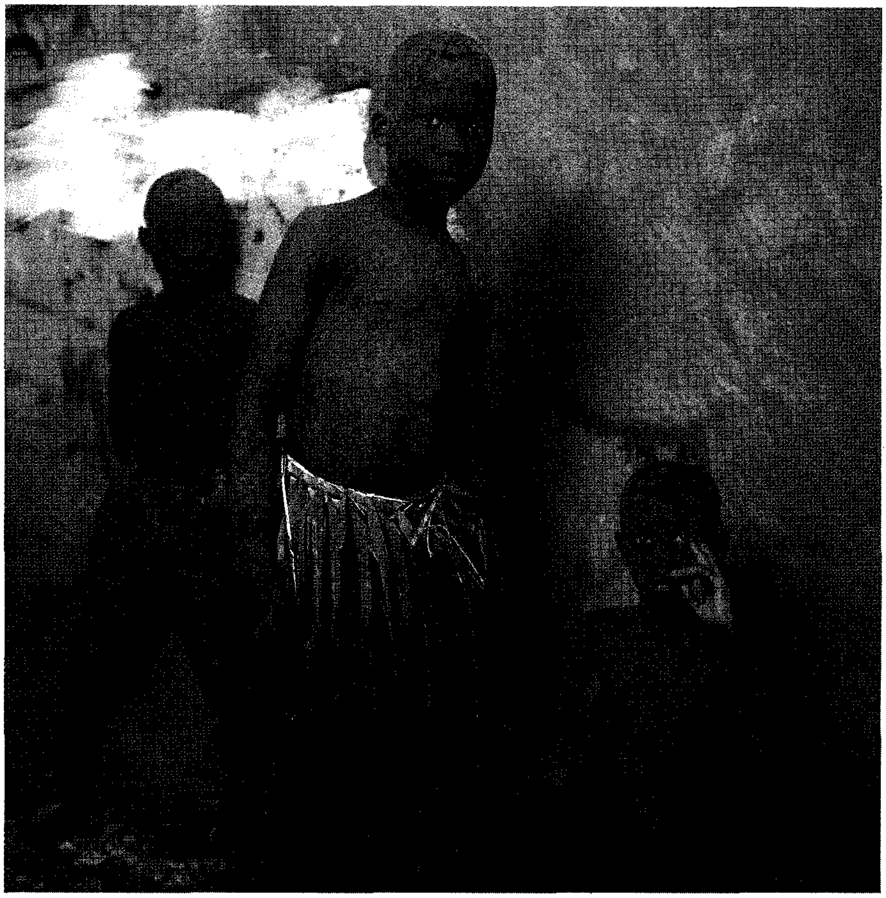
CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wrap-around murals, and, through July 2, **Eartha Kitt.**

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA
Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—June 21-26: **Francesco Cafiso,** young, virtuosic, and Italian, is an alto saxophonist championed by Wynton Marsalis. Here he's backed by the pianist **David Hazeltine's** trio.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—June 23-26: The songs of the pianist, singer, and composer **Mose Allison** drip with caustic wit, and his eccentric keyboard work mixes rural blues with strains of Bud Powell, Béla Bartók, and Jimmy Yancey. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.** The **Mingus Big Band** takes over on Tuesdays.

JVC JAZZ FESTIVAL
This year's gathering is all over the place stylistically, much like the contemporary jazz scene itself, although free-jazz and more avant performers remain mostly absent. The second-week shows include the popular, ever-questing trio of **Keith Jarrett, Jack DeJohnette,** and **Gary Peacock** (Carnegie Hall, June 22); a double bill with the luminous threesome of **Paul Motian, Bill Frisell,** and **Joe Lovano** and the fusion-meets-newgrass union of **Stanley Clarke, Jean-Luc Ponty,** and **Béla Fleck** (Carnegie Hall, June 23); a "Salsa Meets Jazz" double bill with **Eddie Palmieri y la Perfect II** and **Ray Barretto** (Carnegie Hall, June 25); **"New York Now!,"** a marathon evening of new jazz with, among many others, Ben Allison's Kush trio, Tim Berne's Hard Cell, the Marty Ehrlich sextet, and the Rudresh Mahanthappa quartet (Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St., June 25); and the duo of the pianist **Harry Connick, Jr.,** and the saxophonist **Branford Marsalis** (Carnegie Hall, June 25). (See also the Village Vanguard. For more information, visit www.festivalproductions.net.)

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Thanks to the JVC Jazz Festival, the audacious clarinettist **Don Byron** has a week to parade his many musical projects. June 22: Byron's here with his big band. June 23: The **Symphony Space Adventurers Orchestra.** June 24-25: The Ivey-Divey Trio, featuring **Jason Moran** and **Billy Hart.** The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.



"Three Painted Boys, Carnaval à Jacmel, Haiti, 2004," by Phyllis Galembo, at Sepia.

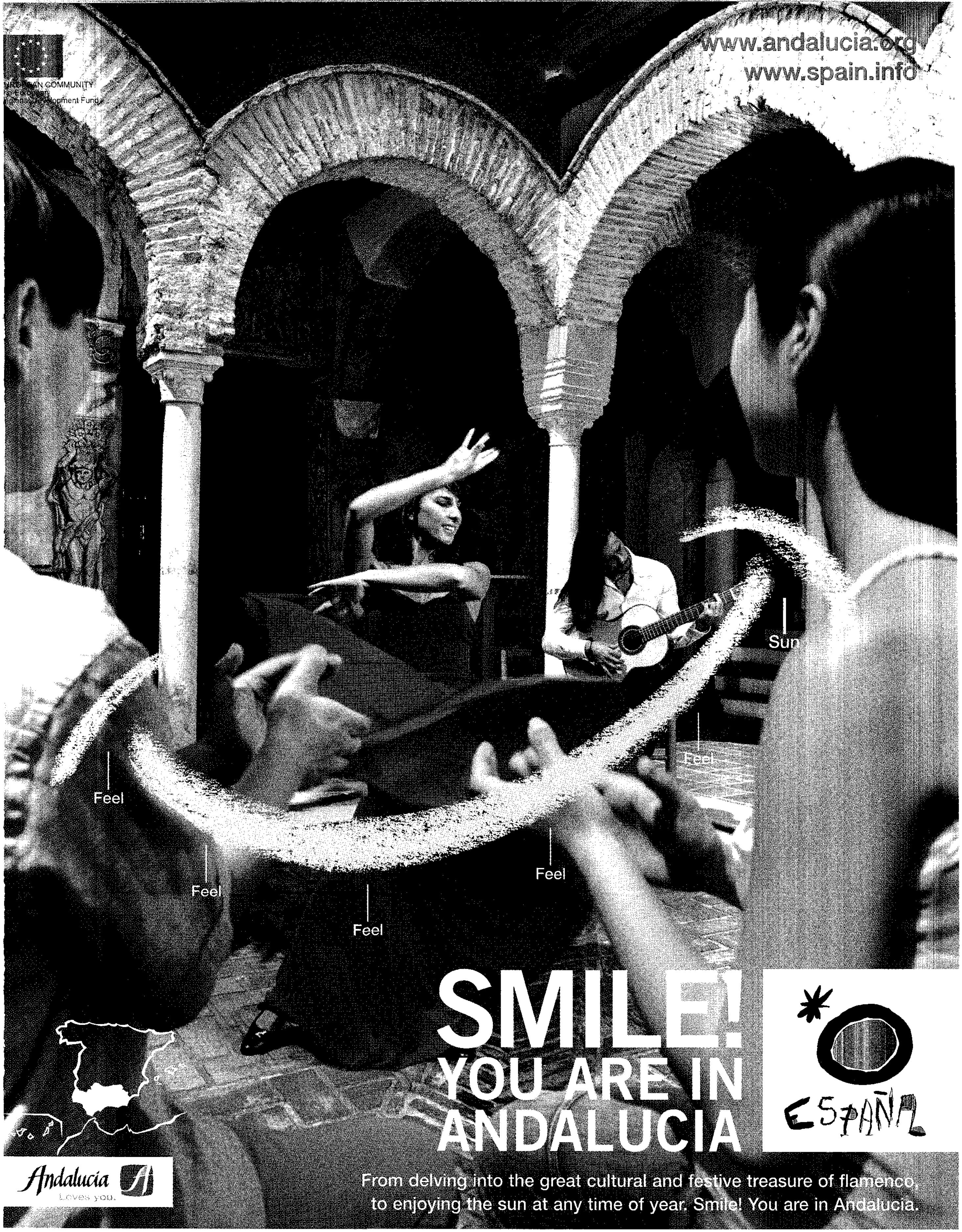
ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—**"Matisse: The Fabric of Dreams, His Art and His Textiles"** pairs swatches from the artist's collection of fabrics with some seventy-five paintings, drawings, prints, and collages. Opens June 23. ♦ Two recent installations are on view in **"Tony Oursler at the Met: 'Studio' and 'Climaxed.'"** The first contemplates the influences at work on the artist through an assemblage of pieces by the likes of Jacqueline Humphries, Rem Koolhaas, and Kaare Rafoss. The second, more traditional Oursler work is a giant, lumpy potato head with flames and a blinky face projected on it, its mouth voicing demented and hilarious threats, boasts, and sorrows. Through Sept. 18. ♦ **"All the Mighty World: The Photographs of Roger Fenton, 1852-1860."** Through Aug. 21. ♦ **"Chanel,"** a retrospective of designs from the couture house. Through Aug. 7. ♦ **"John Townsend: Newport Cabinetmaker"** presents a few dozen pieces by a prominent Colonial American furniture-maker alongside additional work by his contemporaries. Through Sept. 25. ♦ **"Sol LeWitt on the Roof: Splotches, Whirls, and Twirls."** A summer installation in the roof garden of five spiky stalagmite sculptures and a wall drawing. Through Oct. 30. ♦ **"Max Ernst: A Retrospective."** Some hundred and eighty paintings, drawings, sculptures, collages, and illustrated books by the restlessly creative artist (1891-1976). Through July 10. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"Friedlander,"** a major retrospective of the work of the photographer Lee Friedlander (born 1934). Through Aug. 29. ♦ **"The High Line"** details Field Operations and Diller Scofidio & Renfro's ambitious urban rails-to-trails scheme for the abandoned elevated tracks that run along the West Side from Gansevoort to Thirty-fourth Street. Through Oct. 31. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—An adviser to Solomon R. Guggenheim and the curator of his institution's early iteration, as the Museum of Non-Objective Painting, Hilla Rebay (1890-1967) was also a prolific and adventurous artist, convinced that abstraction could teach "rhythmic action, spiritual uplift, and exquisite joy." **"Art of Tomorrow: Hilla Rebay and Solomon R. Guggenheim"** reveals the feisty German expatriate to be a brilliant and independent colleague of the artists she championed, with an ample selection of paintings, watercolors, pastels, and collages. Her work fills two galleries, and a third samples the Kandinskys, Légers, and Moholy-Nagys she chose to start the museum's collection. Through Aug. 10. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—It's no longer news that contemporary painters are inspired by visions of data overload and cyber hybridization: networks, mutant forms, and dense, imagined cartographies are everywhere in the art of this century. **"Remote Viewing: Invented Worlds in Recent Painting and Drawing"** gathers eight exemplars of this generalized preoccupation; if the point about the Zeitgeist is less than earth-shattering, the work itself looks great. Sprawling, colorful canvases (and some works on paper) by Franz Ackermann, Carroll Dunham, Julie Mehretu, Alexander Ross, Steve DiBenedetto, Ati Maier, Matthew Ritchie, and Terry Winters actually look more inventive in company than they would standing alone—high praise for a group exhibition. Through Oct. 9. ♦ The eclectic gathering of works from the permanent collection in **"Landscape"** ranges from Jasper Johns's white maps to Ed Ruscha's rows of L.A. streets to Roni Horn's eerie comparison of the body and the earth, "Becoming a Landscape"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A
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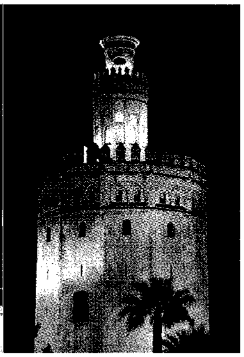
lamenco

Spanish Andalucía is set amongst golden beaches, craggy mountains, and warm, sensuous climes. Bathed by both the Atlantic and Mediterranean, five of its eight provinces have outlets to either the ocean or sea. From the Arabic *Al-Andalus* ("land of the west"), this region is where the Spanish character is most tangible and its history, palpable.

At the head of these historic crossroads is Seville, from where Spanish explorers set sail. Its emblem is the Giralda, a bell tower and former minaret, first constructed by the Moors between 1184 and 1197. Granada's Alhambra palace, one of the most visited monuments in the world, perches on a hill and helps define that proud metropolis. A great mosque dating from 994, the Mezquita, characterizes Córdoba, while the Moorish fortresses of Almería and Málaga remain those cities' signatures. Cádiz has its bay, Huelva, the marshlands, and Jaén its olive trees. In the outlying regions, travelers can sunbathe on fine-sand beaches or enjoy winter sports at Sierra Nevada, the Continent's southernmost ski resort. Scattered throughout, are ancient churches and palaces.



Andalucía is awash in history's push and pull. But what defines this region best? Perhaps it is its music, fiery flamenco. A complex amalgam of Arab, Hindu, African, Jewish, Iberian, and Romany song, Flamenco began among Andalucía's minarets, monuments, and cathedrals. Its unique mix could have come from nowhere else. At the core of flamenco is *cante jondo,* a lamentation on solitude, pain, and loss—sometimes compared with American blues music. The sound is noted, too, for its vigorous and rigorously intricate handclapping. Often, flamenco is accompanied by ritualized dance, distinguished by purposeful gestures and fast-moving footwork. To this day, the performers are often Romany, and they are a living expression of this sunny land's interwoven culture with a rich and perceptible past. ▬

Visit **OKSPAIN.ORG** and **SPAIN.INFO** when planning your trip to Spain.

(1999-2001). Through Sept. 18. ♦ **"Banks Violette: Untitled"** contemplates the romantic sublime with a model of a ruined church cast in salt, backed with music by the Black Metal musician Snorre Ruch. This is Violette's first solo show at a museum. Through Oct. 2. ♦ **"Prints Into Drawings,"** a roomful of prints that were made in the last fifty years, illustrates the shared techniques of drawing and printmaking. Through Aug. 28. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

CHELSEA ART MUSEUM
556 W. 22nd St. (212-255-0719)—Eighty diminutive etchings from an original 1799 print run of Francisco Goya's **"Los Caprichos"** are interspersed with a show of contemporary work, **"Here Comes the Bogey-Man."** The pieces here are considerably less controversial than Jake and Dinos Chapman's 2003 project, for which they bought a set of Goya's "Disasters of War" etchings and added cartoon heads: Yasumasa Morimura forges the most direct link, re-creating "Ruega por Ella (She Prays for Her)" in photographic form; Saint Clair Cemin's macabre wood-and-tar "Monument to Credit Card Debt" is aptly gloomy; and Madeleine Hatz's clumpy abstract paintings recall Goya's nervous line. It's easy to look right past the contemporary works; Goya's etchings, including the Romantic icon "The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters," are clearly the main draw. Through Sept. 24. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

FRICK COLLECTION
1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700)—When Goethe became privy councillor to the Grand Duke Karl August of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, in 1776, part of his job was to buy drawings. He did this with the guidance of the era's foremost critic, Denis Diderot, who dispatched sparkling, scathing reports on the Paris salons to connoisseurs unable to attend. A choice sampler of the eighteenth-century works on paper thus gathered appears in **"From Callot to Greuze: French Drawings from Weimar."** The usual apple-cheeked maidens, leafy copses, pastoral tableaux, and Biblical scenes abound, described in beautiful chalk and conté crayon gestures by Messrs. Boucher, Vanloo, Le Brun, and company. Through Aug. 7. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (212-534-1672)—The designers of the historical video exhibition **"Timescapes,"** James Sanders and Jake Barton, drew their formal inspiration for the three-screen installation from Charles and Ray Eames and their spiritual inspiration from New York's patron poet, Walt Whitman. They, too, love the city's bustle and squalor, its "orgies, walks and joys," and the "frequent and swift flash of eyes," which they chronicle with photographs from the museum's vast archives: Percy Byron's images of upper-class families in their drawing rooms, for instance, are contrasted with Jacob Riis's tenement scenes of the same era. Thirty-five digital maps illustrate how bridges, roadways, and trains were engines for urban growth, how the present was raised on the past, and how the varied carols of new immigrants continue to shape our beloved metropolis. Ongoing. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

QUEEN SOFÍA SPANISH INSTITUTE
684 Park Ave., at 68th St. (212-628-0420)—In **"From Goya to Sorolla,"** a roomful of nineteenth-century paintings reads like a single thread pulled from the cloth of the European salon tradition; a vitrine of small Goya drawings can be viewed as intimately as if they were in a private home. Large-scale paintings are gathered in a room upstairs, and a long gallery in the basement includes some early-twentieth-century works. Through July 30. (Open Mondays through Thursdays, 10 to 6, Fridays, 10 to 8, and Saturdays, 11 to 5.)

THE SCULPTURE CENTER
44-19 Purves St., Long Island City (718-361-1750)—The twenty-eight young artists in **"Make It Now: New Sculpture in New York"** are collectively refining ironic rag-picking into earnest recycling. Ester Partegàs's "Monument to the Truth" is an enormous mass concealed under a blue tarp, cordoned off by plywood, and marked "Pardon our appearance while under construction." Assemblages of scrap wood, pill bottles, Styrofoam, Coca-Cola, bubble wrap, and cardboard boxes posit personal agency in the face of junk-culture inundation. In spite of this more or less coherent statement, though, much of the work isn't up to snuff—even established artists like Rachel Harrison, Vincent Mazeau, Phoebe Washburn, and Luis Gispert seem to have brought B-game objects. Through July 31. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 11 to 6.)

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM
144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500)—**"Bill Traylor, William Edmondson, and the Modernist Impulse."** Through June 26. ♦ Chris Ofili's **"Afro Muses"** (1995-2005) are woozily outlined "imaginary portraits" in watercolor, drawn from history, memory, and everyday life. Through July 3. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; and Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

ROBERT RISKO

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Summer-hours warning: many galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. Others follow the normal Tuesday-to-Saturday schedule. It's best to call ahead.

NOBUYOSHI ARAKI
Twelve very big black-and-white diptychs from Araki's series "Tokyo Nude" are shown unframed on walls that have been painted the color of fresh blood for maximum dramatic effect. Each pair mates one of the photographer's trademark nudes—pretty young women posed self-consciously in anonymous interiors—with a grungy fragment of the Tokyo streetscape. Although the combinations appear fairly arbitrary, there's still something provocatively abrasive about the juxtaposition of flawless alabaster bodies and urban back alleys, rooftops, and demolition sites. But Araki's stance is so determinedly cool that whatever heat this series sparks tends to dissipate fast, leaving a purely formal satisfaction. Through June 25. (Yoshii, 17 E. 76th St. 212-744-5550.)

GLEN BAXTER
Baxter, a frequent contributor to this magazine, makes ink-and-pastel drawings of surreal scenes, often involving cowboys or Robin Hood and his Merry Men. Explanatory captions fill in the characters' conversations—"We don't exactly hold much with chiaroscuro right here in El Paso, stranger," " 'Tis called polenta, Robin, and as a floor covering it hath no equal"—and complete Baxter's screwball visions of the intersection of high and low culture. Through July 30. (Flowers, 1000 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 212-439-1700.)

JANET CARDIFF
Cardiff's guided, narrated walk through Central Park is back for a second summer. The artist transforms familiar scenes with scraps of Baudelaire and Kierkegaard, stories of loss and regret, snippets of Gluck's "Orfeo ed Euridyce," and photographs of old park scenes that are tucked in with the CD player. The walk takes forty-five minutes and ends in a quiet patch of woods near Bethesda Fountain, after which you walk your equipment back to Fifty-ninth Street. Through Sept. 11. (Starts at the kiosk on Central Park South at Sixth Avenue; a credit card or photo I.D. is required to take out the audio equipment. Thursdays through Sundays, 10 to 3:30. For more information or for reservations, call the Public Art Fund at 212-980-3942.)

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

SANDOW BIRK
What if Dante's pilgrimage to spiritual insight unfolded in the here and now of hellish subway platforms and Golden Arches? Birk's suite of "Paradiso" drawings is the third installment in a massive project illustrating—and, what's more astonishing, re-

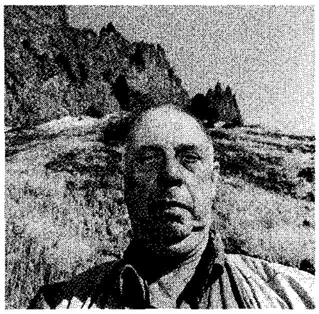
CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
THE HERE AND NOW

Judd Greenstein, a young composer based in Princeton who's beginning to draw notice in New York, wrote hip-hop beats as a teenager, and his concert works weave together multiple pulses in an easy, bouncing motion. "Folk Music," which Greenstein wrote in the summer of 2004, is one of the freshest pieces I've heard so far this year: a Ravel-like kaleidoscope of intertwining figures built up from the simple notes of the B-minor scale. In May, the New York Youth Symphony premièred Greenstein's "Today and Everyday," which was written with September 11th in mind. The subject of Greenstein's piece is not so much the tragedy itself but the mood of the days that followed, when a city of millions found something like a small-town spirit. In the opening and closing parts of the work, Greenstein tries out grand, populist gestures; the striking middle section is a slow-moving crowd of chorales. (Samples of Greenstein's music can be heard online, at juddgreenstein.com and nowensemble.org.)

—*Alex Ross*

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
FINDING FRIEDLANDER

With nearly five hundred photos, almost all of them modestly scaled black-and-white prints, the Lee Friedlander retrospective at the Museum of Modern


LEE FRIEDLANDER

Art demands more than the usual amount of stamina from gallerygoers. In part, this is Friedlander's fault: his signature style undermines all notions of classic composition and tends to thwart the casual viewer. Typically, his works are dense with information: often structured as images within images, they are thickets of reflection, disjunction, and confusion. But Friedlander is a genius (and a comedian) of disorder, and he teases a perverse logic from the chaos of a busy intersection, a tangled patch of brambles, or an awkwardly splayed nude. The curator, Peter Galassi, has found a persuasive logic for the show's design, which is sensitive but sly. Galassi knows how to make Friedlander's seriousness as seductive as his wit, and how to convey his vision of totality—the sense that everything both inside and outside the frame matters—without ever letting us get overwhelmed. The show feels at once modest and spectacular.

—*Vince Aletti*

translating—"The Divine Comedy." Along with his collaborator, Marcus Sanders, Birk renders the poet's matter-of-fact but awed tone with just the right slangy brashness, while his drawings show a hoodie-wearing Dante escorted through Times Square, a Chinese restaurant, and a graffiti-marked street by a zaftig Beatrice in a sundress. The "Inferno" (set in L.A.) and "Purgatorio" (in San Francisco) installments are also on display in lavish books. Through June 25. (P.P.O.W., 555 W. 25th St. 212-647-1044.)

JONATHAN CALM
A suite of videos and digitally manipulated photographs examine issues related to race and poverty. "Scratching Chance" shows black hands scratching lottery tickets and ends with an aching gospel song; the narrator in "Staircase Gamble" weighs his chances with a housing project's elevator and staircase, finally opting for the stairs and "praying for luck." The digital diptych photos combine urban images—phone booth, basketball hoop, park sculpture—with the textured bark of sycamore trees to achieve an updated Minor White look. The real mystery is the show's title, "Offline & Infamous," which seems oddly boastful paired with such earnest work. Through June 25. (Golden, 539 W. 23rd St. 212-727-8304.)

BRYAN CROCKETT/ JENNIFER STEINKAMP
Crockett's paintings, drawings, and sculptures are stamped with an art-school-style Sturm und Drang, with images and motifs cribbed from Surrealism, Hieronymus Bosch, Caspar David Friedrich, and bad seventies album-cover art. His colored-pencil doodlings carry embarrassing titles like "Constellations in My Mind #2," and a wooden plank holds plaster models of hearts, brains, and Yoda-like figures. Steinkamp provides levity with her fanciful animations of moving, flowering plants, but her work suffers the problem of much floral art: while it is lovely and restful, its decorative whimsy wilts under deeper scrutiny. Through June 24. (Lehmann Maupin, 540 W. 26th St. 212-255-2923.)

SAM EASTERSON
Easterson attaches the guts of video cameras—the lens and a microchip—to the backs of various creatures and records the world from their point of view. For this show, he worked with bugs—a tarantula, a cricket, a scorpion, and a housefly—most of which jettisoned the surveillance device within a few seconds, but not before Easterson captured some footage of their movement. Shown on a monitor here with a soundtrack of amplified scuttling noises, these images are likely to revive childhood fantasies (or horrors) of communing with nature. Color stills freeze a few of these disconcertingly intimate moments in all their impressionistic dreaminess. Through June 30. (Cooney, 511 W. 25th St. 212-255-8158.)

SARAH SZE
Sze arranges scavenged materials into complex miniature landscapes that simultaneously suggest the junk yard and the choreographed chaos of a Julie Mehretu painting. There's an element of Fred Sandback, too, in the planes created by a few pieces of yarn stretched tight; the front gallery is bisected by a dizzying diagonal that tilts toward a dense assemblage of boxes, pushpins, and more in a low corner. In the back gallery, a hanging sculpture built largely from disposable cups and Styrofoam plates whirls and bobs in a fan-powered breeze. It's soothing, delicate, and personal work, with an ambience as relaxing as a Zen garden despite the horror-vacui massing of objects. Through July 1. (Boesky, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-680-9889.)

Short List

SOPHIE CALLE: Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 212-255-1105. Through July 22. **PHYLLIS GALEMBO:** Sepia, 148 W. 24th St. 212-645-9444. Through July 29. **JOAN MITCHELL:** Cheim & Read, 547 W. 25th St. 212-242-7727. Through June 25. **MALCOLM MORLEY:** Sperone Westwater, 415 W. 13th St. 212-999-7337. Through June 25. **TOBIAS PUTRIH:** Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 212-633-6999. Through June 25. **PIERRE SOULAGES:** Haim Chanin, 210 Eleventh Ave. 646-230-7200. Through June 25.

DANCE

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE
The romantic, swashbuckling ballet "Le Corsaire," with choreography by Konstantin Sergeyev, after Petipa, and staging by Anna-Marie Holmes, begins this week, as the Michel Fokine celebration wraps up. To see the cast lists, visit www.abt.org. ♦ June 20-22 at 8 (Fokine celebration): "Les Sylphides," "Petrouchka," "Le Spectre de la Rose," and "Polovtsian Dances." ♦ June 23-24 and June 27-28 at 8 and June 25 and June 29 at 2 and 8: "Le Corsaire." (Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center. 212-362-6000. Through July 16.)

NEW YORK CITY BALLET
The season closes with a week of performances of Balanchine's "Midsummer Night's Dream." For cast lists, visit www.nycballet.com. June 21 at 7:30, June 22-24 at 8, June 25 at 2 and 8, and June 26 at 3. (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-870-5570.)

URBAN BUSH WOMEN
A twentieth-anniversary program at the Joyce is a showcase for the robust, exuberant dancing of Jawole Willa Jo Zollar's all-female, all-African-American troupe. The rowdy "Batty Moves" is a riff on booty-shaking, while "Give Your Hands to the Struggle" is a solo for an aching woman warrior. In the New York première of last year's "Walking with Pearl—Africa Diaries," the journal entries of the dance pioneer Pearl Primus are read like an incantation while the dancers move with the concentrated harmony of a flock of birds. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. June 21 at 7:30, June 22-25 at 8, and June 26 at 2 and 7:30.)

"RAIN"
Quebec's Cirque Éloize eschews animals and greasepaint in favor of high-flying stunts and surreally beautiful images. Its latest spectacle, set on a vaudeville-era stage, offers plenty of both. The gymnastic daring is impressive, but the show's real strength is the director Daniele Finzi Pasca's eye for composition. His best scenes, like the one in which a lissome girl spins from a rope behind a translucent red curtain, have the feeling of color-saturated paintings coming to life. (New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200. June 22-24 at 7, June 25 at 2 and 8, and June 26 at 1 and 7. Through July 10.)

EIKO AND KOMA
In "Death Poem," the celebrated duo reflects on mortality, recognizing that in mourning the deaths of others we partially mourn our own inevitable ends. The spectral figure of Koma haunts in the background as Eiko, enmeshed in mosquito netting, alternates between urgent action and passing the time, presenting death as both personally momentous and universally commonplace. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-8194. June 23-26 at 8:30.)

"BEAT IT"
In an unapologetically pop-culture-minded performance piece that takes place over the course of eight days, the choreographer Erin McMonagle learns the steps to the 1984 Michael Jackson video "Beat It" (on June 27), then teaches the moves to the featured dancers Aaron Mattocks and Annie Weinberg (June 28). In future performances, the pros teach the choreography to any and all comers. On July 4, all the week's participants are invited to join in a grand finale, presenting the dance en masse. (Chashama, 217 E. 42nd St. No tickets necessary. From 2 to 10. Through July 4.)

WASHINGTON REFLECTIONS DANCE COMPANY
The ten-member contemporary ballet company from D.C. presents "Purple Haze," a duet set to the Jimi Hendrix song; "Beyond Two," set to tracks by Nine Inch Nails; and other repertory pieces, including Derrick Spear's "Spoken Word," a meditation on the civil-rights era, set to music by Arvo Pärt and by the Harlem hip-hop chanteuse Kelis and featuring excerpts from a speech by Martin Luther King, Jr. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. June 24-25 at 7:30 and June 26 at 2.)

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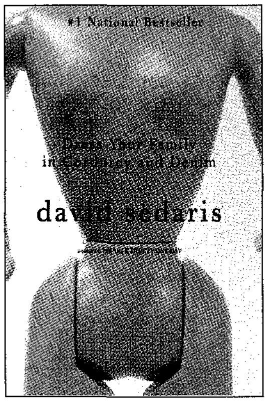
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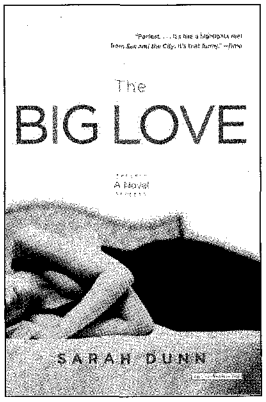
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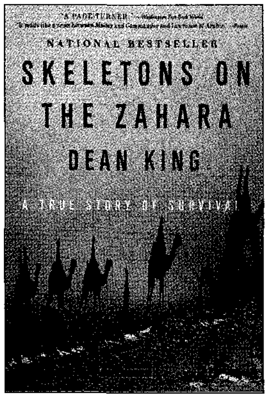
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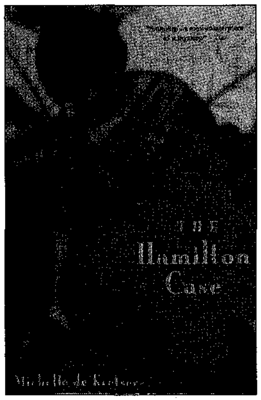
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WARNER
BOOKS

"TAP CITY"
After four years at the Duke on 42nd Street, the New York City Tap Festival moves downtown to the larger quarters of the Joyce, in Chelsea. The festival director, Tony Waag, has collapsed the multiple categories of previous years into two programs: "Tap All-Stars/Tap Internationals" and "Tap Masters, Mentors, Divas and Legends." The scrambled lineup makes for a rich variety-show mix of world-class tapping: soloists and ensembles, seasoned masters and hungry upstarts, dancers from Japan and dancers from down the block. (175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. June 28 at 7. Through July 3.)

OUT OF TOWN

JACOB'S PILLOW
Savion Glover presents a family album of tap dancing. There's his rambunctious protégé, fifteen-year-old Cartier A. Williams. Then there's Glover, in his prime at thirty-one. Dianne Walker, tap's nurturing aunt, represents the next-oldest generation with her classy stylings, and tap's reigning godfather, Jimmy Slyde, shows, at seventy-six, just how long mastery can last. Members of Glover's versatile touring band, the Otherz, join the rhythmic conversations. (Ted Shawn Theatre, Becket, Mass. 413-243-0745. June 21-24 at 8, June 25 at 2 and 8, and June 26 at 2.)

TANGLEWOOD
The Mark Morris Dance Group presents the repertory pieces "Mosaic and United" and "Lucky Charms" and the world première of "Cargo," set to Darius Milhaud's "La Création du Monde." (Seiji Ozawa Hall, Lenox, Mass. 617-266-1200. June 26-27 at 8:30.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC CONCERTS IN TOWN

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Lorin Maazel, who loves nothing more than to apply his considerable intellect and matchless baton technique to the challenge of a grand Romantic work, closes the Philharmonic's regular season with four performances of Mahler's Symphony No. 6, "Tragic." (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656. June 22-23 at 7:30 and June 24-25 at 8.)

"MET IN THE PARKS"
The Metropolitan Opera once more offers plein-air productions in the area's parks. There won't be any scenery or fancy costumes, but the atmosphere is festive and the performances are free. **"Tosca"** features Cynthia Lawrence, Oleg Kulko, and James Morris in the leading roles; Derrick Inouye conducts. (Cunningham Park, Queens. June 22.) ♦ With Aprile Millo and Francisco Casanova replacing Lawrence and Kulko. (Buccleuch Park, New Brunswick, N.J. June 25.) ♦ Mark Baker and Malgorzata Walewska head the cast of **"Samson et Dalila"**; the venerable Julius Rudel is on the podium. (Brookdale Park, Montclair, N.J. June 24.) (All performances begin at 8. No tickets required. For more information, call 212-362-6000. These are the final performances.)

JOHN KAMITSUKA
The Abby Whiteside Foundation presents the American pianist, an exceptionally focussed Bach player, in a recital featuring the Prelude and Fugue in F Minor from Book I of "The Well-Tempered Clavier," along with works by Beethoven, Brahms (the "Handel Variations"), and Yehudi Wyner (a New York première). (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. June 22 at 8.)

ROULETTE FESTIVAL OF MIXOLOGY '05
Angie Eng and David Weinstein, a multimedia artist and a composer who have created "Memobile," an interactive performance piece inspired by nomadic movement, lead off the final week of technologically innovative performances at the downtown venue. (Location One, 20 Greene St. 212-219-8242. June 22 at 8:30. For a full schedule, see www.roulette.org.)

BARGEMUSIC
The pianist and lecturer Jeffrey Swann devotes two programs to the ever-mysterious Franz Liszt. June 23-24 at 7:30: The first, "The Religious Mystic," features such works as "Funérailles," "Bénédiction de Dieu dans la Solitude," and "Années de Pèlerinage No. 3: Italia." ♦ June 25 at 7:30 and June 26 at 4: "Liszt and Faust," a program exposing the composer's more sensualistic side, includes the "Mephisto Waltzes" Nos. 1-4 and the Sonata in B Minor. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

THE DESSOFF CHOIRS: "SONGS FOR A SUMMER EVENING"
Frank Nemhauser, a finalist to become the excellent nonprofessional chorus's new director, conducts a concert featuring summery music evoking both field ("Sumer Is Icumen In," Britten's "Five Flower Songs") and river (Barber's "To Be Sung Upon the Water"), along with works by Bartók and Monteverdi. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. June 23 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

KITCHEN HOUSE BLEND
This lively band, made up of virtuosos from the worlds of contemporary classical, jazz, and rock, serves as an anchor for the venue's wide-ranging list of musical offerings. Its latest concert is a culling of favorite commissions from the last several years, including works by Matthew Shipp, Kitty Brazelton ("Consider the Carving Knife"), and Lee Hyla. (512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793. June 25 at 8.)

TABLES FOR TWO
YUMCHA

29 Bedford St. (212-524-6800)—This little place is only a minute's walk from Sixth and Seventh Avenues and Houston Street, with their eternal traffic, and yet its quiet corner seems miles and years away, a throwback to the Village of "My Sister Eileen" and red sauce. The restaurant itself, though, is many years in the other direction—it's an up-to-date Chinese fusion restaurant whose chef, Angelo Sosa, is a protégé of Jean-Georges Vongerichten. Though it's only a couple of months old, it's already a hit. If you walk in without a reservation, you are unlikely to find a seat at any of the ten tables, or even at the bar or the counter in front of the bustling open kitchen, unless you arrive at the gong of six, when the restaurant opens.

The marinated Hawaiian jellyfish-salad appetizer may not beckon to many eaters, but it is a lovely, understated dish—more jelly than fish, it's the kind of savory condiment that serves to get your appetite in gear. A bountiful number of plump, perfect, wok-turned Prince Edward Island mussels come with a generous amount of tangy, garlicky black-bean-and-seafood-sauce broth; the garnish of baby Thai basil and cilantro keeps the saltiness nicely in check. The seven entrées cover plenty of ground, from farm to sea, and the steamed yellowtail snapper, with remarkably tender flesh and pretty pink skin, is outstanding. The only disappointment is a side dish of green Shanghai shoots, which are similar to bok choy—they lie limply in an overwhelmingly saccharine sweet-and-spicy sauce.

"Yumcha" means "drink tea" in Cantonese, and, when the weather is sizzling hot, you would be well advised to follow that directive and order a cooling green-tea Martini immediately—especially if you find yourself at the counter, where the microclimate tends toward the intemperate. The acoustically unfortunate space may, in fact, incite you to have several Greenteanis, if only to distract yourself from the deafening din, which forces dinnertime conversation to be conducted in a tone generally reserved for addressing cars that cut you off when you're crossing the street. (Open Mondays through Fridays for dinner and Saturdays and Sundays for brunch and dinner. Entrées $16-$26.)

—*Nancy Franklin*

"FREE FOR ALL AT TOWN HALL": EVELYN GLENNIE
The percussionist, a vibrant performer and the master of more than five hundred instruments, closes this season's series of free concerts with a program of contemporary works by some of the percussion world's virtuoso composers (including Keiko Abe and Leigh Howard Stevens). (123 W. 43rd St. June 26 at 5. Tickets, which are limited to two per customer, will be available at noon on the day of the performance.)

AUSTRIAN CULTURAL FORUM
Two young Austrian singers, Charlotte Leitner and Alexander Kaimbacher, offer an evening of music by the sweet-toothed but substantial composer Erich Wolfgang Korngold, whose concert music is finally becoming as well known as his scores for Hollywood films. (11 E. 52nd St. June 27-28 at 8. For free tickets, which are required, call 212-319-5300, ext. 222.)

OUT OF TOWN

TANGLEWOOD: "BORIS GOUDENOW"
Boston's musical duchy likes to bring in outside groups as warmup acts for the Boston Symphony Orchestra's official opening concert, on July 8. One is the renowned Boston Early Music Festival, which offers two encore performances of its world-première production of Johann Mattheson's 1710 opera (long thought lost), based, of course, on the same story of royal intrigue that fired Mussorgsky's masterwork. The performers include the soprano Ellen Hargis and the bass Vadim Kravets (in the title role). (Lenox, Mass. 888-266-1200. June 24-25 at 7.)

NORFOLK CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL
After many years of distinguished, if quiet, perseverance, the Yale School of Music's summer festival is showing a new spiciness in its programming. June 24 at 8: The first concert is a program of songs (by Copland, Ives, Judith Weir, and Aaron Jay Kernis, among others) performed by the radiant soprano Susan Narucki. ♦ June 25 at 8: Next comes the world première of "Feynman," an opera for baritone (Michael Cavalieri) and percussion ensemble (So Percussion) by the guitarist Jack Vees inspired by the intrepid physicist Richard Feynman's life, death, and fascination with Tuva, an impossibly distant Central Asian republic. (Norfolk, Conn. 860-524-3000.)

MAVERICK CONCERTS
The longest-running chamber-music series in America, housed in a rough-hewn wooden hall with exceptionally warm acoustics, opens its ninetieth season with a concert by the Contrasts Quartet, a noted ensemble of clarinet, violin, cello, and piano, performing music by Beethoven (the Clarinet Trio, Op. 11), Schubert, Aaron Jay Kernis, and Peter Schickele. (Woodstock, N.Y. June 25 at 6. For more information, call 845-679-8217.)

CARAMOOR FESTIVAL
Michael Barrett's second year as executive director of Westchester's elegant music festival will include plenty of surprises, but it starts out in fine, traditional fashion with an evening devoted to Beethoven's "Fi-

delio" Overture and the Ninth Symphony. Janice Chandler-Etme, Mary Phillips, Simon O'Neill, and Philip Cutlip are the vocal soloists; Peter Oundjian conducts the Orchestra of St. Luke's. (Katonah, N.Y. 914-232-1252. June 25 at 7.)

HUDSON VALLEY CHAMBER MUSIC CIRCLE
The mini-festival, a quiet interlude before the onslaught of the supersized Bard Summerscape schedule, concludes with the Orion String Quartet, who will offer quartets by Haydn, Bartók (No. 5), and Schubert (in D Minor, "Death and the Maiden"). (Olin Hall, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. 518-537-6665. June 25 at 8.)

MUSIC MOUNTAIN
This esteemed annual series, held in an acoustically crisp shoebox hall, hosts the Jacques Thibaud Trio, a vibrant young German string group, and the pianist Tao Lin, who will offer Mozart's Piano Quartet in G Minor and Schumann's Piano Quartet. (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126. June 26 at 3.)

MOVIES
OPENING

BEWITCHED
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening June 24. (In wide release.)

DALLAS 362
In Scott Caan's directorial début, a young man (Shawn Hatosy) decides to become a rodeo cowboy, which strains his relationship with his best friend (Caan). With Jeff Goldblum and Kelly Lynch. Opening June 24. (Village East Cinemas.)

HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
The Love Bug enters a NASCAR competition. With Lindsay Lohan, Matt Dillon, and Michael Keaton. Opening June 22. (In wide release.)

LAND OF THE DEAD
George A. Romero ("Dawn of the Dead") directed this horror film, about a walled city where the rich live in skyscrapers, the poor live on the streets, and the walking dead want to get in. Opening June 24. (In wide release.)

LILA SAYS
A drama about two teen-agers, a Catholic girl and an Arab boy, in the ghetto of Marseilles. Directed by Ziad Doueiri. In French. Opening June 24. (Angelika Film Center and Metro Twin.)

MARCH OF THE PENGUINS
Luc Jacquet's film documents a year in the life of a flock of emperor penguins. Narrated by Morgan Freeman. Opening June 24. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

MEMORIES OF MURDER
A crime thriller directed by Bong Joon-ho, about a series of killings in a small South Korean town in 1986. In Korean. Opening June 24. (Cinema Village.)

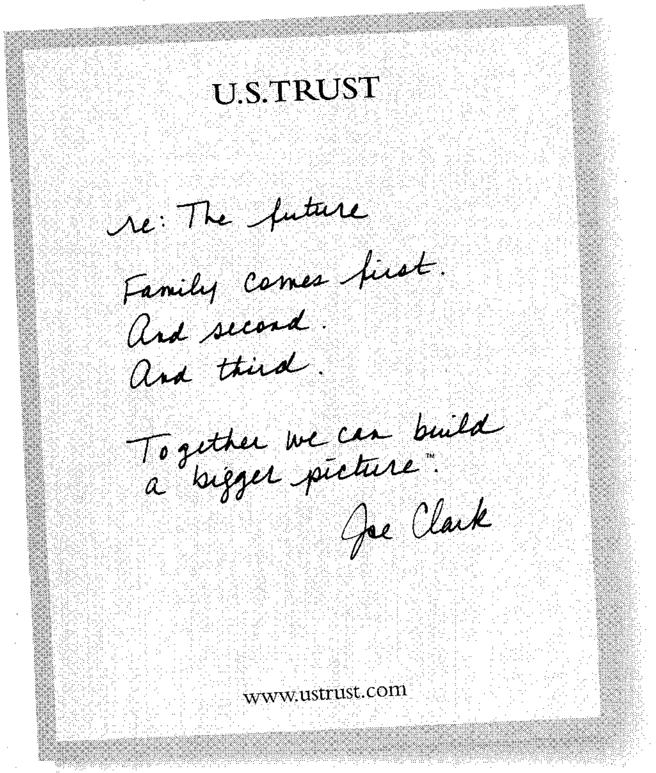
RIZE
The photographer David LaChapelle directed this documentary, about the evolution of a dance movement from the streets of L.A. Opening June 24. (In wide release.)

THE WAR ON THE WAR ON DRUGS
Cevin Soling's comedy parodies the U.S. government's antidrug campaign. Opening June 24. (Quad Cinema.)

YES
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening June 24. (First & 62nd Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

NOW PLAYING

BATMAN BEGINS
And ends with a whimper. Christopher Nolan, working with a screenplay that he wrote with David S. Goyer, has attempted a literal-minded myth of creation. The orphaned young Bruce Wayne (a gloomy Christian Bale) undergoes an initiation in some nameless Asian snow-capped mountains, where he's trained by a morally ambiguous adjunct (Liam Neeson) to a shadowy ninja vigilante leader (Ken Watanabe). Neeson, wearing a pointy little beard, keeps knocking Bale down as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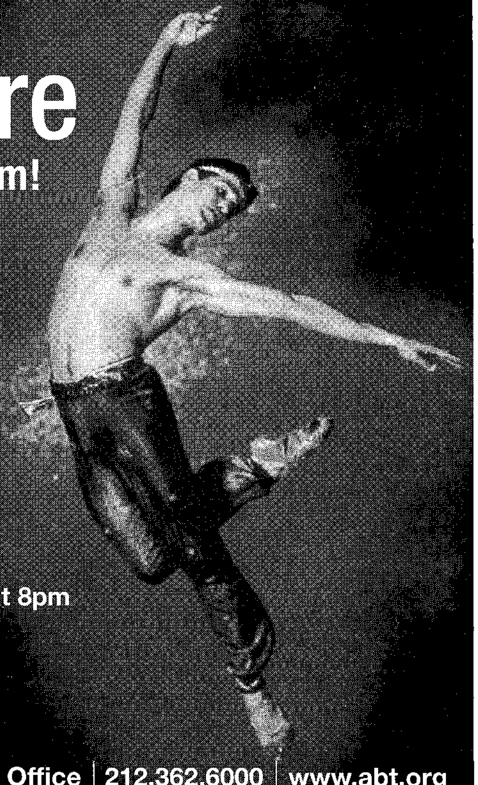
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June 25 & 29 at 2pm

Jose Manuel Carreño in *Le Corsaire*. Photo by Nancy Ellison.

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he says such things to him as "To conquer fear you must become fear." The screenplay sounds as if it were written after a course in self-realization taken on Santa Monica Boulevard, and the direction is both pompous and cheesy, with ridiculous plot developments and lots of whirling movement shot so close that we can't really see anything. Gotham is no longer a malignant paradise of evil; it's just dark. With Morgan Freeman and Michael Caine wasted in poorly written roles as Batman's allies.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 6/13 & 20/05.) (In wide release.)

CINDERELLA MAN

Russell Crowe teams up with the director Ron Howard for the first time since "A Beautiful Mind," and instead of schizophrenia we get broken ribs. This is the story of the boxer James J. Braddock, who fell from favor during the Great Depression, only to claw his way back and snatch the World Heavyweight title in 1935. Crowe lends the character a determined dourness, refusing to turn Braddock's bewildering comeback into a victory parade—a good thing, too, for without that unsmiling restraint the whole saga might sound too good to be true. Anybody whose memory resounds to "Raging Bull," with its bedevilled hero, will feel badly shortchanged by this picture, yet Howard is the right man for stirring simplicity, and his casting is on the money. Braddock's opponents are gratifyingly bisonlike, and Paul Giamatti has a ball in the role of Joe Gould, the trainer who stood by his man. Who would have bet that the grouch of "American Splendor" could end up so natty and, yes, splendid, in a gray plaid suit and tie?—*Anthony Lane* (6/6/05) (In wide release.)

CRASH

A brazenly alive and heartbreaking film about the rage and foolishness of intolerance—the mutual abrasions of white, black, Latino, Middle Eastern, and Asian citizens in Los Angeles. The movie starts off with separate vignettes in which the characters run afoul of each other, say things better left unsaid, and get into terrible trouble. The furiously candid screenplay was written by Paul Haggis and Robert Moresco, and the picture was directed by Haggis, who, in his first time out as director, demonstrates an amazing skill with actors. Don Cheadle, as a withdrawn, melancholy police detective, is the star, and the other players include Terrence Howard and Thandie Newton as an upper-class African-American couple, Brendan Fraser and Sandra Bullock as an L.A. district attorney and his bitchy wife, Chris (Ludacris) Bridges and Larenz Tate as carjackers, Matt Dillon and Ryan Phillippe as cops, and Shaun Toub as an Iranian shopkeeper who thinks everyone is out to cheat him.—*D.D.* (5/2/05) (In wide release.)

HIGH TENSION

Up until its dreary twist ending, this French thriller (partially—and distractingly—dubbed in English) is an effective frightfest. Two young women (portrayed by the fabulously named Maïwenn Le Besco and Cécile de France) vacation in a rural area in the South of France, where a mad killer is on the loose. As the townspeople are picked off one by one, the director, Alexandre Aja, narrows the film to a claustrophobic and unironic game between the killer and his prey. In French and English.—*Bruce Diones* (In wide release.)

HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE

The latest animated extravaganza by Hayao Miyazaki is not as awe-inspiring as his masterpieces, "Princess Mononoke" and "Spirited Away," but it's still a richly inventive and enchanting delight. The timid Sophie (voiced by Emily Mortimer) falls for a young draft-dodging wizard (Christian Bale), who lives in a great gear-twisting contraption of a castle. When the wicked Witch of the Waste (Lauren Bacall) turns Sophie into an old crone, the movie becomes a series of spell-breaking adventures. Though more languorous and less urgent than it needs to be, the film still has the Monty Python-esque playfulness that is Miyazaki's specialty—it is exquisitely delicate one moment, deliriously hallucinatory the next.—*B.D.* (In wide release.)

LATE SPRING

Noriko (Setsuko Hara), a widowed professor's grown daughter, loves the scholarly Hattori (Jun Usami), who is already engaged. Her father (Chishu Ryu) and her meddling aunt (Haruko Sugimura) arrange a suitable but loveless match for her, which she would refuse, if only she could find a socially acceptable excuse. In Yasujiro Ozu's 1949 film, rigid formality leaves much unsaid, but Ozu reveals the hidden depths of ordinary life with a quiet astonishment and observes his characters with an exacting subtlety of expression. He views the artifacts of Occupation with irony—between exultant images of Noriko's romantic bicycle ride with Hattori, Ozu wryly shows a roadside Coca-Cola sign—but films the serenity of a tea ceremony with reverence. By the end, Noriko's open and forthright smile becomes a rictus of pain, and neither Japanese tradition nor American-style freedom offers her any relief from the universal tyranny of love. In Japanese.—*Richard Brody* (Museum of the Moving Image; June 25-26.)

The documentary "March of the Penguins" opens June 24.

ZOHAR LAZAR

MADAGASCAR

In DreamWorks' latest attempt at an animated blockbuster, four overcivilized animals from the Central Park Zoo get transported to the wilds of Madagascar. It's a good comic premise, and much of the animation is beautiful, but the filmmakers don't follow through on their ideas. When the kvetching New Yorkers hit the jungle, we hope to see how their peculiar urban skills will allow them to deal with the creeping and crawling terrors. A few cobwebs cling to them, but the chief menace, the Foosas—nasty, hyena-like creatures—turns out to be a bunch of pussycats. Great visuals, lousy plot. With Ben Stiller as Alex the lion, Chris Rock as Marty, a zebra who horses around too much, David Schwimmer as a hypochondriacal giraffe, and Jada Pinkett Smith as a commonsensical hippo. Directed by Eric Darnell and Tom McGrath.—*D.D.* (5/30/05) (In wide release.)

ME AND YOU AND EVERYONE WE KNOW

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (IFC Center.)

MR. AND MRS. SMITH

Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, a married couple who work as professional killers, are unhappy in bed, so they warm each other up by firing machine guns, Glocks, and God knows what else at each other at point-blank range and then kicking each other in the groin. When you see it, you understand why the rest of the world thinks Americans are crazy. Doug Liman, the young director who began his career making nifty independent movies like "Swingers" and "Go," now apparently believes that if violence is insouciant and zippy and meaningless it will be taken as the latest in sophisticated fun. Jolie, turning her head sideways and dropping her eyelids, looks great, but what she does in this movie is more like voguing than acting, and Pitt's voice is so toneless and inexpressive that it's frequently inaudible. Written by Simon Kinberg.—*D.D.* (6/13 & 20/05) (In wide release.)

MY SUMMER OF LOVE

In Pawel Pawlikowski's dreamy tale of nubile sixteen-year-old girls in lush, sunny Yorkshire, Mona (Natalie Press) lives above a pub and couldn't be lonelier, or more disgusted with her brother, Phil (Paddy Considine), for his born-again Christian fervor. When cool, refined Tamsin (Emily Blunt) appears on the moors on a white steed and takes Mona to her summer estate, the girls show off their respective talents—Tamsin for (mis)quoting philosophers and playing the cello flawlessly, Mona for channelling the experienced woman she will one day become. As they engage in the cruel tricks typical of teenage girls, Tamsin keeps Mona at a sly distance while seducing her easily. Press, who looks like a young Sissy Spacek, and Blunt, with her impervious liquid stare, are terrific. The natural moments between them, which transcend the labored repentant-brother subplot, capture the thrill of finding a person who makes you feel like there is no one as smart, funny, or good-looking as the two of you.—*Shauna Lyon* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

ROCK SCHOOL

A new documentary by the first-time filmmaker Don Argott, about the Paul Green School of Rock Music, in Philadelphia. Green takes a position of zero condescension toward his students, ages nine to seventeen—demanding a lot, loudly and profanely voicing his displeasure when they fall short. He can be a self-serving, if self-aware, pain in the ass, but there's some topnotch comedy material in his rants. The film follows the students as they prepare for a Frank Zappa festival in Germany, tackling some of the most difficult and sophisticated music in the rock canon. Beyond the chords and the rhythms, Green's method is about imbuing the kids with a confident look-at-me attitude. The finale at the Zappa festival is not only a musical triumph but also tremendously moving.—*Ken Marks* (Lincoln Square and Village Theatre VII.)

STAR WARS—EPISODE III: REVENGE OF THE SITH

That's all, folks. After five front-line reports from a galaxy far, far away, George Lucas has come to the end of his tale—or, rather, gone back to where he began. For devotees, it will signal a fond and snuffling farewell, as they bid adieu to a vast parade of clones, Ewoks, Darths, tragic hair styles, noble knights, and strangely fastidious androids. For the rest of us, there will be nothing but inexpressible relief. Hayden Christensen plays Anakin Skywalker, who is increasingly lured toward what he calls the dark side and what the rest of us would call frowning. Aiding him is the corrupt Palpatine (Ian McDiarmid), the Chancellor of the Republic,

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while those trying to thwart our hero's crossover include his pregnant wife (Natalie Portman) and, of course, Obi-Wan Kenobi (Ewan McGregor), who is himself thwarted by an unspeakable British accent. There are frantic duels, murderous dialogue, and a final, fetishistic transformation of trashed Jedi into evil lord, but the suspicion remains that Lucas has left deep space a far shallower place than he found it.—*A.L.* (5/23/05) (In wide release.)

VANYA ON 42ND STREET

In one of the finest of all stage-to-screen translations, the theatre director André Gregory and a dream ensemble came up with an exhilarating performance of Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya," and Louis Malle filmed it perfectly in 1994; his graceful imagery actually heightens the actors' freeness and intensity. With her playfulness, empathy, and quicksilver intelligence, Julianne Moore immediately makes you see why the beautiful Yelena's appearance with her gouty old scholar husband (George Gaynes) upsets the routine of the rural estate run for them by his brother-in-law, Vanya (Wallace Shawn), and Sonya (Brooke Smith), his daughter from his first marriage. Yelena forges a bond of humor and dissatisfaction with Vanya and entrances both him and a family friend, Dr. Astrov (Larry Pine), but stays faithful to her husband—without becoming either a victim or a tease. Smith is equally smashing as the pained, honest Sonya, and Shawn's Vanya is a marvel—twisted, yet somehow indomitable beneath his clowning and kvetching. Malle's 1990 film "May Fools" was a delightful light-comic variation on "Uncle Vanya"; taking off from Gregory's workshop of the real thing, he achieved a classic rendering of family convolutions played out in a spent countryside.—*Michael Sragow* (Walter Reade Theatre; June 26.)

Also Playing

EDVARD MUNCH: Cinema Village. **5 X 2:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema. **THE LONGEST YARD:** In wide release. **MAD HOT BALLROOM:** In wide release. **SAVING FACE:** In wide release. **THE TALENT GIVEN US:** Angelika Film Center. **WHEEL OF TIME:** Film Forum.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES

32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—New filmmakers. June 22 at 8: "What's So Funny?" (2004, Sandra Longo). ♦ Special screenings. June 23 at 8: "Black and White" (2004, Shannon Plumb). ♦ June 25 at 8: "Loisada, Avenue C" (1998-99, Maeva Aubert). ♦ "Essential Cinema." June 25 at 6: "Rapt" (1933, Dimitri Kirsanoff; in French). ♦ June 26 at 5: "Intolerance" (1916, D. W. Griffith; silent). ♦ "Storefront Films." June 28 at 7:30: "Lessons of Darkness" (1992, Werner Herzog; in German, English, and Arabic).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS

30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—Through June 29: "*Village Voice* Best of 2004." June 22 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:30: "Facing Windows" (2003, Ferzan Ozpetek; in Italian). ♦ June 23 at 7: "Woman Is the Future of Man" (2004, Hong Sangsoo; in Korean). ♦ June 24 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Crimson Gold" (2003, Jafar Panahi; in Farsi). ♦ June 25 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Darwin's Nightmare" (2004, Hubert Sauper; in English, Russian, and Swahili). ♦ June 26 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Infernal Affairs" (2002, Andrew Lau and Alan Mak; in Cantonese). ♦ June 27 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Birth" (2004, Jonathan Glazer). ♦ June 28 at 6 and 9: "The Corporation" (2003, Jennifer Abbott and Mark Achbar).

FILM FORUM

W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—James Dean films. June 22-23 at 1, 4:40, and 8:20: "Giant" (1956, George Stevens). ♦ Through July 21: "Paramount Before the Code." June 24-25 at 1, 4:30, and 8: "Trouble in Paradise" (1932, Ernst Lubitsch). ♦ June 24-25 at 2:40, 6:10, and 9:40: "Blonde Venus" (1932, Josef von Sternberg). ♦ June 26 at 1, 4:40, and 8:20: "I'm No Angel" (1933, Wesley Ruggles). ♦ June 26 at 2:55, 6:35, and 10:15: "Girls About Town" (1931, George Cukor). ♦ June 27 at 2:50, 5:40, and 8:30: "Madame Racketeer" (1932, Harry Wagstaff Gribble and Alexander Hall). ♦ June 27 at 1:30, 4:20, 7:10, and 10: "The Devil Is Driving" (1932, Benjamin Stoloff). ♦ June 28 at 3:35, 6:40, and 9:45: "Hot Saturday" (1932, William Seiter). ♦ June 28 at 2, 5:05, and 8:10: "Search for Beauty" (1934, Erle C. Kenton).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL

55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—"Occupation of France Series." June 28 at 12:30, 4, and 7: "It Happened at the Inn" (1943, Jacques Becker; in French).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—North American première. June 22 at 5:30, June 23 at 8, June 24 at 8:30, June 25 at 8:45, and June 26 at 2: "Mon Oncle" (1958, Jacques Tati; in French).♦ The films of Hanna Schygulla. June 22 at 6: "Lili Marleen" (1981, Rainer Werner Fassbinder; in German). ♦ June 22 at 8:30: "A Love in Germany" (1983, Andrzej Wajda; in Polish). ♦ June 26 at 5: "Circle of Deceit" (1981, Volker Schlöndorff; in German). ♦ "Outstanding Short Films from International Festivals." June 22 at 8:15 and June 23 at 6: A showcase of recent short films from around the world (2003-04). ♦ "Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata: Masters of Animation." June 23 at 6: "Porco Rosso" (1992, Miyazaki). ♦ June 23 at 8:15: "Kiki's Delivery Service" (1989, Miyazaki). ♦ June 24 at 5:15: "Only Yesterday" (1991, Takahata). ♦ June 25 at 2: "Laputa: Castle in the Sky" (1986, Miyazaki). ♦ June 25 at 4: "My Neighbor Totoro" (1988, Miyazaki). ♦ June 25 at 6: "Heidi—Girl of the Alps" (1974, Takahata, Atsuji Hayakawa, and Masao Kuroda; in Japanese). ♦ June 25 at 8:15: "Spirited Away" (2001, Miyazaki). ♦ Edward Yang films. June 24 at 7:30 and June 27 at 6: "Yi Yi" (2000; in Mandarin, English, and Hokkien). ♦ June 25 at 2 and June 26 at 1: "A Brighter Summer Day" (1991; in Mandarin, Shanghainese, and Taiwanese). ♦ June 25 at 6:30: "The Terrorizer" (1986; in Mandarin). ♦ "Miramax: 25 Years." June 26 at 5:30: "The Piano" (1993, Jane Campion). ♦ A Robert Flaherty film seminar. June 27 at 6: "Africa, I Will Fleece You" (1993, Jean-Marie Téno; in French). ♦ June 27 at 8:30: "Colonial Misunderstanding" (2004, Téno; in French, German, and English).

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—"Fist and Sword: Martial Arts Film Classics." June 24 at 7:30: "House of Flying Daggers" (2004, Zhang Yimou; in Mandarin). ♦ Through July 3: "Asian City Films." June 25 at 1: "Yi Yi" (2000, Edward Yang; in Mandarin, English, and Hokkien). ♦ June 25 at 4:30 and June 26 at 2: "Café Lumière" (2003, Hou Hsiao-hsien; in Japanese and English). ♦ June 26 at 4:30: "PTU" (2003, Johnny To; in Cantonese). ♦ Repertory nights. June 25-26 at 6:30: "Late Spring" (†).

SUNSHINE CINEMA

143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—Midnight movies. June 24-25: "Taxi Driver" (1976, Martin Scorsese).

THALIA THEATRE

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—June 26 at 4 and June 28 at 8:15: "Downfall" (2004, Oliver Hirschbiegel; in German). ♦ June 26 at 7 and June 28 at 6: "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" (1964, Jacques Demy; in French).

WALTER READE THEATRE

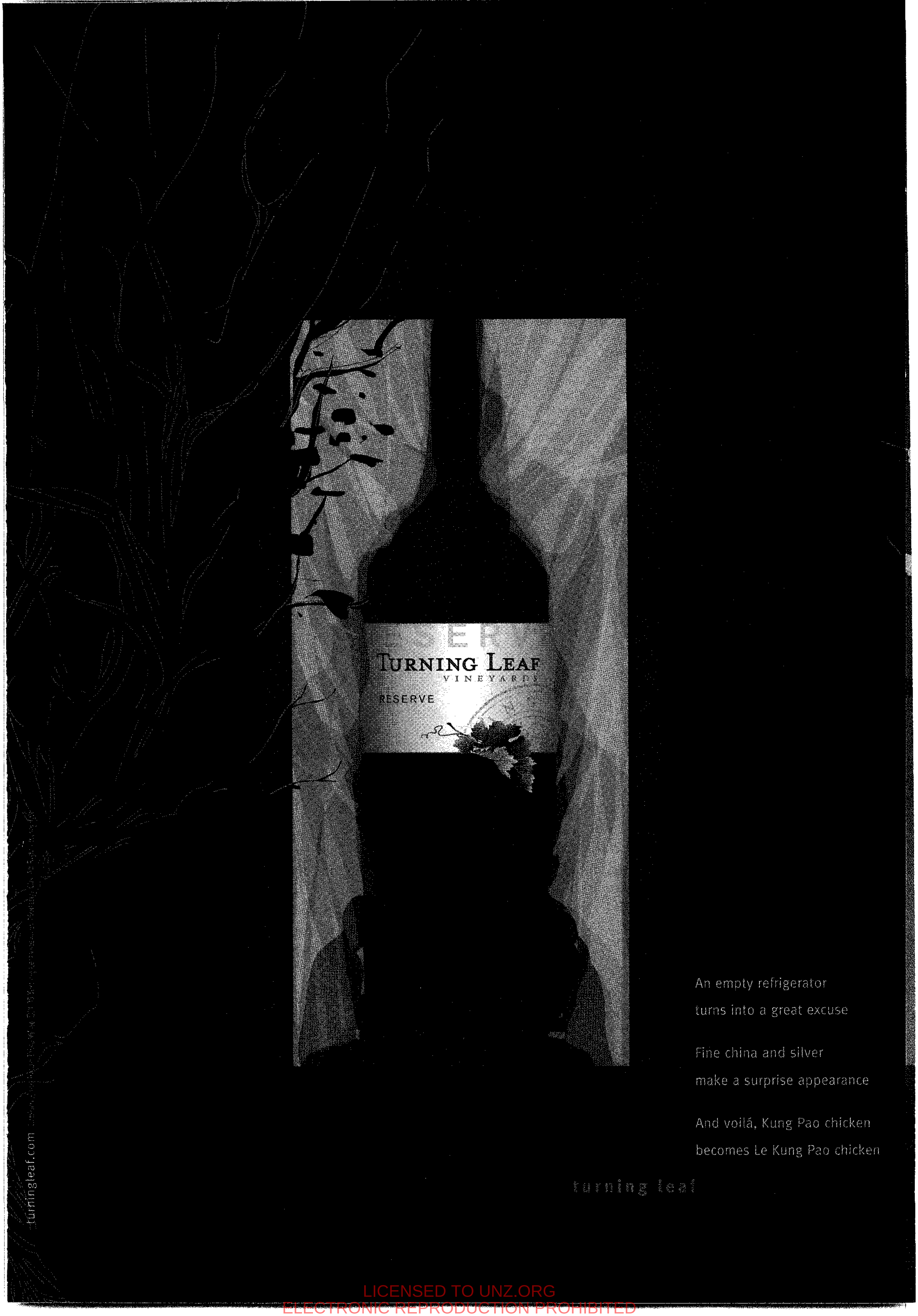
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through June 23: The Human Rights Watch International Film Festival. June 22 at 2: "Compadre" (2004, Mikael Wiström; in Spanish). ♦ June 22 at 4:30: "Justice" (2004, Maria Ramos; in Portuguese). ♦ June 22 at 7: "Pulled from the Rubble" (2004, Margaret Loescher). ♦ June 22 at 9 and June 23 at 4:15: "Videoletters: Group 2" (2004-5; Katarina Rejger and Eric van den Broek; in Albanian, Bosnian, Croatian, Macedonian, Serbian, and Slovenian). ♦ June 23 at 2: "Videoletters: Group 1" (2004-05, Rejger and van den Broek; in Albanian, Bosnian, Croatian, Macedonian, Serbian, and Slovenian). ♦ June 23 at 7: "The Boys of Baraka" (2004-05, Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady). ♦ Through July 19: "Risks and Reinvention: The Cinema of Louis Malle." June 24 at 1: "Elevator to the Gallows" (1958; in French). ♦ June 24 at 3:10: "Murmur of the Heart" (1971; in French). ♦ June 24 at 5:30: "Au Revoir les Enfants" (1987; in French and German). ♦ June 25 at 12:30 and June 27 at 1: "The Silent World" (1956, Jacques-Yves Cousteau and Malle; in French). ♦ June 25 at 2:15: "Calcutta" (1969; in French). ♦ June 25 at 4:20: "Atlantic City"

POP NOTES
RARE ESSENCE

The nineteen-seventies English band Gang of Four comes up every few minutes these days because of the huge influence that its scratchy, skeletally funky rock has exerted on a recent crop of popular guitar bands: the Rapture, Franz Ferdinand, Bloc Party, and the Futureheads, among others. Gang of Four's original members—the singer Jon King, the guitarist Andy Gill, the bassist Dave Allen, and the drummer Hugo Burnham—recently reunited after more than twenty years to undertake a tour, during which they played in front of kids who have been ripping them off without ever having seen them in action. V2 will release newly recorded versions of their old songs in the fall, but all of this news is as dust next to the original document—their 1979 début, "Entertainment!" (reissued by Rhino), one of the most efficient, articulate rock records ever made.

After meeting in and around the University of Leeds, the four musicians decided to combine punk's raw energy with a loose take on Marxist self-critique. Their lyrics approached every social relationship as a potential exploitation: love affairs, marriages, jobs, friendships. "Send me back/Open the till/Give me the change you said would do me good," King sang in "Damaged Goods." The title of another song, "Natural's Not in It," summed up the band's approach: they rejected conventional wisdom and substituted critical thinking whenever possible. This critique applied to everything, even their instruments. (What can this do that the other instruments can't do? Why do I have to play it the way anyone else plays?) On the phenomenal opener, "Ether," about political prisoners in Northern Ireland, Allen's bass sets out a cloggy loop, Burnham tattoos a related pattern, and Gill cracks away at his guitar intermittently, joining Allen when you expect him to be following Burnham. They all play at a distance from one another but are still connected, a brilliant formal trick that mimics the social atomization they sing about. There's not a single bad lyric here, and not a note sounds false or timid. The 2005 reissue adds a fine 1980 EP as well as some inessential alternate and live versions, but the original album remains unimpeachable. When they tackle love in "Anthrax," which includes a minute-plus guitar-feedback intro, the world stops a little bit. No other band has ever done anything like this, and the imitators only make it clearer. God bless them.

—*Sasha Frere-Jones*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(1980). ♦ June 25 at 6:30: "My Dinner with André" (1981). ♦ June 25 at 9:15: "The Fire Within" (1963; in French). ♦ June 26 at 1: "Zazie dans le Métro" (1960; in French). ♦ June 26 at 3:15 and June 27 at 3: "The Lovers" (1958; in French). ♦ June 26 at 5:30: "Lacombe, Lucien" (1974; in French, German, and English). ♦ June 26 at 8:30: "Vanya on 42nd Street" (†).

READINGS AND TALKS

"EDUCATING THE IMAGINATION"
This year, the annual reading presented by Teachers & Writers Collaborative, a nonprofit organization that places professional writers in local classrooms, pays tribute to Nancy Larson Shapiro, who has led the group for the past thirty years. The publisher Steven Schrader, the novelist Wesley Brown, the writer Leonore Gordon, and students from P.S. 156K are among those reading. Expect many alumni of the program to be in attendance. (Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 5 Union Sq. W., 7th fl. 212-691-6590. June 22 at 6.)

MICHAEL CROW
The pseudonymous writer, identified by his publisher only as the author of "five well-received literary novels," reads from his latest Luther Ewing thriller, "No Way Back." (Rocky Sullivan's, 129 Lexington Ave., between 28th and 29th Sts. No tickets necessary. June 22 at 8.)

"THE DA VINCI CODE: IS THERE A WOMAN IN THAT PAINTING?"
Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, an adjunct professor of religious art and cultural history at Georgetown University's Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, discusses depictions of Mary Magdalene from medieval paintings right up through her appearance in Dan Brown's novel. (Dahesh Museum of Art, 580 Madison Ave., between 56th and 57th Sts. 212-759-0606. June 23 at 6:30.)

"PARK LIT"
In the summer, many authors move from staring at their manuscripts in libraries, bookstores, and bars to staring at their work in public parks. This new series reflects the natural state of things, with readings in green spaces throughout Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. It starts with the fiction writers Martha McPhee, James Lasdun, and Sam Brumbaugh. (Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St. For more information, call 212-696-6609 or visit www.opencity.org/parklit. June 23 at 6:30. Through Aug. 24.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"FAREWELL AT THE FULTON FISH MARKET"
For the past two decades, Naima Rauam has worked at the Fulton Fish Market, but she doesn't sell seafood—at least not directly. Rauam is a painter, and in her studio on the second floor of the market building she's made countless watercolors depicting the predawn trade. The market is moving to the Bronx later this summer, and this weekend as a sendoff Rauam is showing her work inside the stall of the Blue Ribbon Fish Company, amid scales, hand trucks, and fish boxes. Further tributes include screenings of short videos about the market on Saturday and on Sunday at 2 a presentation by Jack Putnam, a former market employee now with the South Street Seaport Museum, who will read his own "Fish Market Monologues" and from the writings of Joseph Mitchell. (1 Fulton Fish Market, east side of South St. at Beekman St. June 24-25 from noon to 8 and June 26 from noon to 6. For more information, call 212-964-8465.)

MERMAID PARADE
Coney Island's annual celebration of sand, sun, and insanity—in which the homemade costumes always outshine the B-list-celebrity king and queen—has an added feature this year, the Mermaid Ball, featuring bands (including Las Rubias del Norte) and burlesque performers. (June 25 at 2; the ball starts at 6. For more information, visit www.coneyisland.com.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES
The leading lot in **Christie's** sale of European and Oriental rugs on June 22 is a grand Agra carpet assembled in India during the height of the Raj—expansive, delicately woven, and sophisticated in design. Some of the sale's more modest items also have their charms. In a nineteenth-century *suzani* embroidery from Uzbekistan, for instance, pomegranate flowers—oversized and blood red—turn upward from a field of vines and indigo blossoms; a mid-twentieth-century Tuareg reed carpet from Mauritania articulates the starkness of desert life in its minimalist design. The house will also offer ocean-liner furnishings and art (including a letter and several photographs by George Edward Graham, one of the ill-fated passengers on the Titanic), on June 23, and Part III of the Bibliotheca Bibliographica Breslaueriana, a single-owner book sale, on June 27-28. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.) ♦ "Arcade"-type sales—featuring items offered at moderate prices—conclude the spring season at **Sotheby's**, with an auction of art on June 21-22 and sales of furniture, carpets, and decorative art works June 23-24. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.)

MAXIMILIAN BODE

ON THE HORIZON

THE THEATRE
"PRIMO"
July 8

The critically lauded London production, starring Antony Sher and adapted by Sher from Primo Levi's Auschwitz memoir "If This Is a Man," comes to the Music Box Theatre for a one-month run. (212-239-6200.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
CHIU IN CONCERT
July 9

As part of the Maverick Concerts series, the young pianist Frederic Chiu, renowned for his pinpoint elegance and his adventurous spirit, offers "The Nijinsky Connection," a program of works by Debussy, Ravel, Prokofiev, and Griffes. (Woodstock, N.Y. 845-679-8217.)

ART
JEAN HÉLION
July 14-Oct. 9

The French painter, the subject of a National Academy retrospective, is best known for his geometric abstractions, which reflect the influence of artists like Mondrian and Torres García and his training in engineering. (212-369-4880.)

NIGHT LIFE
"JAZZ IN JULY"
July 19-26

The long-running series at the 92nd Street Y has a new artistic director, the pianist Bill Charlap, but the focus remains on mainstream piano work. The major exception this year is a tribute to Jim Hall, the poet laureate of jazz guitarists, on July 21. Backed by Charlap, the guitarist Peter Bernstein, the trumpeter Tom Harrell, and a string section, Hall reviews his three-decade career; the show also includes film clips of his early appearances with Sonny Rollins. (212-415-5500.)

MOVIES
SHIRLEY CLARKE
Aug. 1-4

The experimental filmmaker Clarke, who died in 1997, started out as a Martha Graham dancer and went on to become a pioneer of the American avant-garde film movement of the sixties. BAM will show several of her films, including "The Connection" (1961), about bohemian hipsters waiting for their next heroin fix, "The Cool World" (1964), a gritty portrait of youth set in Harlem, and her Academy Award-nominated short from 1959, "Skyscraper." (718-636-4100.)

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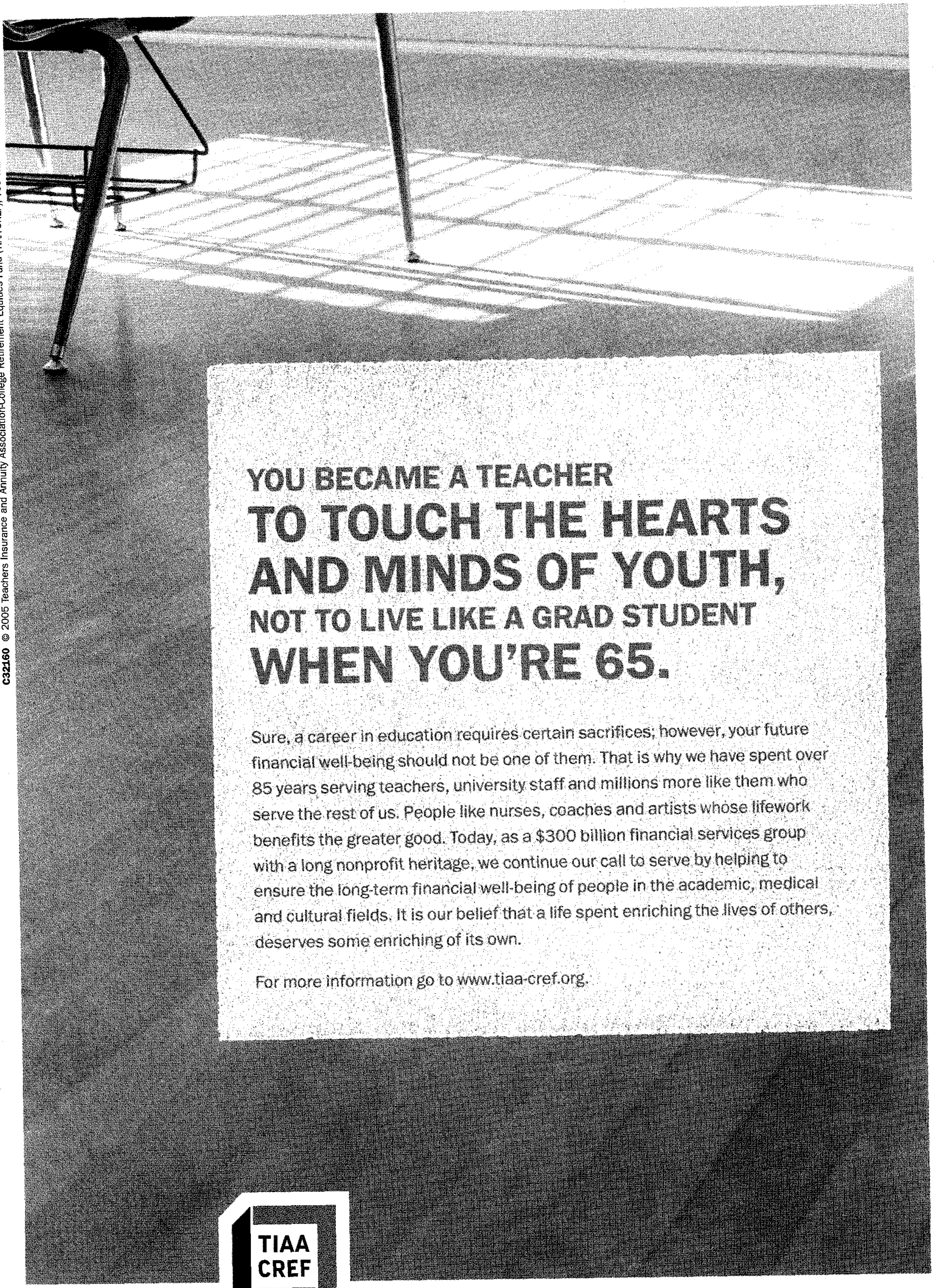

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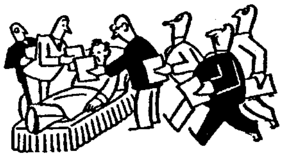
THE
NEW YORKER

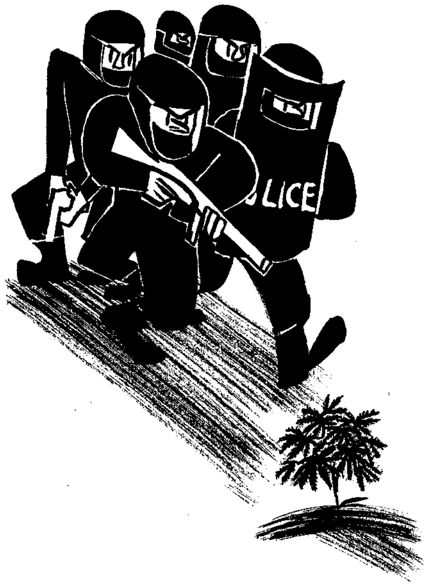
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
WATCHED POT



If hard cases make bad law, as a three-hundred-year-old courthouse saying has it, then the case of Gonzales et al. v. Raich et al. ought to have been easy and good. The case is—or appears to be—about marijuana and illness. On one side is Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, whose et al. consists of the massed power of the United States government. A.G.A.G. et al. take the position that because *Cannabis sativa* is irredeemably wicked and has no legitimate uses, medical or otherwise, the possession of it, to say nothing of its cultivation, distribution, or sale, is quite properly forbidden by federal law. On the other side is Angel Raich, a thirty-nine-year-old mother of two from Oakland, California. Raich does not have cancer, AIDS, multiple sclerosis, or epilepsy—the big-ticket ailments whose symptoms can often be palliated by marijuana. But she does have more than her share of physical troubles, including an inoperable (though nonmalignant) brain tumor. Pharmaceutical remedies having proved unavailing, her physician suggested marijuana, which has worked well enough to afford her something like a normal life.

Raich's et al. consists of a couple of anonymous gardeners who tended the plants whose buds she baked into cookies, and a second California woman, Diane Monson, who grows her own, with which, on her doctor's advice, she relieves her otherwise intractable back spasms. Monson did grow her own, at any rate, until agents of the Drug Enforcement Agency came to her house and chopped down her plants, all six of them, with machetes while she, Barbara Fritchie-like, read aloud the text of Proposition 215, the popular initiative by which California, nine years ago, approved the medical use of marijuana. You might say, therefore, that Raich's et al. also includes, in spirit, the millions of Californians who voted for Prop 215, plus the voters and legislators of the ten other states where medical-marijuana laws have been enacted, plus the Institute of Medicine, the American Academy of HIV Medicine, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Nurses Association, the American Public Health Association, the California Medical Association, the Lymphoma Foundation of America, the New York State Association of County Health Officials, and the Medical Society of the State of New York, plus peer-reviewed publications such as *The Lancet* and the *New England Journal of Medicine*—all of which have attested to marijuana's medical usefulness.



Earlier this month, by a vote of six to three, the Supreme Court went with the A.G. and his et al., leaving Raich and hers in the lurch. But the ruling had nothing to do with marijuana's wickedness (which none of the four written opinions, two on each side, took seriously) and little to do with its efficacy in relieving suffering (which all four took for granted). To make sense of Gonzales v. Raich, a Supreme Court Decoder Ring, available with three box tops from Original Intent Cereal, would be a valuable accessory. The ruling, you see, was all about the Constitution's commerce clause, the one that authorizes Congress to "regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States." The majority asserts demurely that its ruling is "a modest one." The Justices do not say that the federal ban on marijuana is a good idea, or that it makes sense to punish the sick for using it, or that a sick person growing her own pot in her own back yard is engaged in Commerce among the several States. It does not even say that the aggregate production of

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

back-yard medicinal-marijuana gardens would "substantially affect interstate commerce." All it says is that "a 'rational basis' exists for so concluding"—whether or not a more compelling "rational basis" exists for concluding the opposite. But this is enough to sic the feds and their machetes on Ms. Monson's pot patch.

Gonzales v. Raich jumbled the Court's usual ideological battle lines. The four moderate-to-almost-liberal Justices—David Souter, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, and John Paul Stevens, who wrote the majority opinion—ended up, confusingly, on the "anti-marijuana" side. The two softish states'-rights conservatives were divided: Sandra Day O'Connor wrote the main "pro-marijuana" dissent, while Anthony Kennedy went the other way. The hard right split 2–1: the Chief, William Rehnquist, and Clarence Thomas (pro); Antonin Scalia (anti). All very puzzling to civilians, but Decoder Ring-wearing Court observers speculate that the true agenda of the majority (especially its moderate members) was to slow the Court's "federalist" (that is, antifederalist) drift toward chipping away at the regulatory powers of the national government, while the minority's purpose was to accelerate that drift. Kennedy's well-known hostility to pot seems to have trumped his dislike of federal regulation. Scalia's concurring opinion (which, with characteristic modesty, he described as "more nuanced" than Stevens's) was devoted largely to explaining why his concurrence should not be taken to suggest that he likes big gummint.

The least muddled opinion was Justice Thomas's separate dissent, certain passages of which (e.g., "In the early days of the Republic, it would have been unthinkable that Congress could prohibit the local cultivation, possession, and consumption of marijuana") could have been written by Justice Cheech or Justice Chong. Thomas's private views on marijuana are unknown, but if he had his way, as expressed in this particular opinion, any federal interference with homegrown, home-smoked pot, whether for medical or recreational purposes, would be ruled out as an unconstitutional usurpation of the states' powers "to protect the health, safety, and welfare of their citizens." But, then, almost any federal effort to protect those things would be similarly inadmissable. Hello to bong hits, but goodbye to workplace safety, environmental regulations, and Medicare. Thomas's view has the virtue of consistency. But consistency is not the same as wisdom.

Stevens, in the final paragraph of his opinion, came close to begging Congress to do something about the heartlessness of using federal cops to harass sick people whose suffering marijuana eases. He noted that there are bureaucratic procedures that would allow marijuana to be reclassified as a drug with legitimate medical uses. "But perhaps even more important than these legal avenues," he added, "is the democratic process, in which the voices of voters allied with these respondents may one day be heard in the halls of Congress."

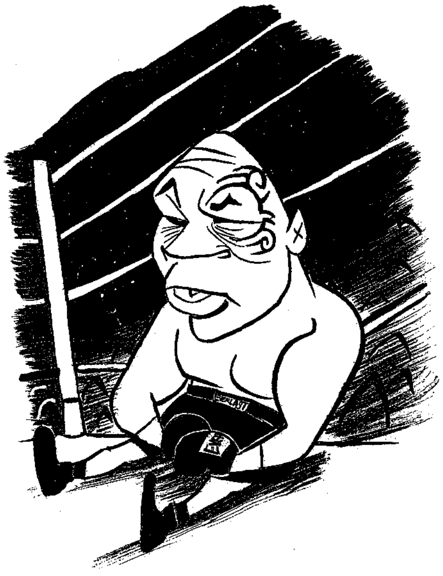
Last Wednesday, as if on cue, the House of Representatives took up for the third straight year the bipartisan Hinchey-Rohrabacher amendment, which would deny the Department of Justice funds to surveil, arrest, or prosecute patients in states that have medical-marijuana laws. For the third straight year, it failed, though the margin of defeat this time was smaller than it was last year, and last year it was smaller than it had been the year before. Someday the cruelty of the "drug war" will give way to laws and policies based on reason and justice. But that day is painfully slow in coming, and no drug, legal or not, can take the pain away.

—*Hendrik Hertzberg*

D.C. POSTCARD
TYSON'S CORNER

It is always perilous to predict the end of anything (ask Francis Fukuyama), but it was surely an adequate sign of boxing's eclipse that, among the fifteen thousand people who paid to see Mike Tyson fight a very tall tomato can named Kevin McBride the other night at the MCI Center, in Washington, many more knew the details of Iron Mike's credit record (more than twelve million in arrears to Internal Revenue) than they did the current and parlous state of the heavyweight division.

As an athlete, Tyson misplaced his dark cloak of invincibility fifteen years ago in Tokyo, when a wan and pillowy pug named Buster Douglas knocked him out. Ever since, the pattern has been the same. Those whom Tyson could intimidate quickly with thudding left hooks and the memory of his criminal reputation were soon safely dispatched, but the game opponents who could brave two or three rounds of the Tysonian whirlwind profited by the desperate rages that inevitably followed: the ear-biting, the head-butting, the attempts to break a limb. Tyson would unravel, fall down, or be disqualified.



Mike Tyson

And so no one in Washington was paying for athletic display. Tyson was everyone's freak show, a grotesque and guilty entertainment at once violent, unpredictable, haunted, thrilling—but truly dangerous only to himself, to his opponent, and to those who, like Desiree Washington, the beauty queen, ended up testifying in court. People paid to see Mike Tyson, one ex-wife suggested, in the same spirit in which they went to horror movies or rode the roller coaster.

And yet Tyson also provided his audiences and chroniclers with a kind of threepenny Raskolnikov and Bigger Thomas. He asked to be pitied, adored, and despised; above all, he pitied, adored, and despised himself. He reeked authenticity. John McEnroe was outrageous to the extent that the son of a partner at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison can be outrageous. He never bit Bjorn Borg, never threatened to eat the spawn of Jimmy Connors. Tyson was unschooled in the niceties. He didn't know his father or who he might have been. His mother, Tyson once said, died in a cardboard box, and he was sure he would end up the same way. As a kid, he was a thug, following old ladies into elevators and beating them up and stealing their groceries. When he became champion, his renunciation of poverty was absolute. During one thirty-three-month period in the mid-nineties, he spent $4,477,498 on cars and motorcycles. (Over the years, he owned a red Lamborghini Countach, a Bentley with a bumper sticker reading "I ♥ Allah," and a Lamborghini "jeep" that had been built for the Saudi king.) He spent ninety-five thousand dollars a month on jewelry and clothing, $411,777 on pigeons and cats, and an untold amount on pet lions, tigers, and "royal blood" Shar-Peis. When he was not training, he redirected his energies. For one erotic marathon, a satrap lined up twenty-four women for the night. His cultural influences were various. When all the tattooing was complete, his face was that of a Maori warrior; Mao smiled murderously from one biceps, and the pacific tennis ace Arthur Ashe was portrayed on the other. Ashe's widow, Jeanne, once said, "If I could sue a body part, I would."

That was the Tyson that all had come to see in Washington. But he was no Kid Dynamite now. Before the fight, Tyson told McBride that he would "gut him like a fish," but he said it gently and without conviction. All the indulgences are, for the most part, sold off, a memory. He lives now in a brick ranch house in a middle-class neighborhood in Scottsdale, Arizona, with a girlfriend and their two children. He refuses to be a monster. "I don't want to be that guy anymore," he said a few days before the fight.

The fight was the usual chapter in Tyson's late-mannerist phase. He was generous in referring to McBride as a "C fighter." McBride's physique suggested a taste for Guinness and idle afternoons in a lawn chair. And yet, in the first three rounds, he absorbed whatever simulacra of the old power Tyson could project. Tyson would hit him square on the jaw and McBride merely stepped back and blinked a few times, looking more confused than pained. Confused, perhaps, that he was not more in pain than he was. By the fourth round, McBride was emboldened to try some punching of his own, and Tyson was chewing on the thumb of his glove, a sure sign, to experienced observers, that he was tired and looking for a way out.

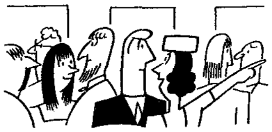
In the corner, Tyson's trainer had only survivalist counsel to offer: "Breathe, Mike, breathe!" And in the sixth Tyson tried everything. He tried to break McBride's arm in the clinch, and, when that led to no conclusive injury, he cocked his head to the right and slammed it leftward into McBride's brow, opening a bloody cut. The referee penalized Tyson two points and gave McBride a moment to clear his head. Defogged and unfazed, McBride bullied Tyson into the ropes and belted him a few times and then, like a man looking for a boost from a friend, pressed down on Tyson's shoulders. Tyson couldn't bear the weight. He slumped to the canvas. And it was there, on his backside, that Tyson (if ensuing vows can be trusted) concluded his career. Once on his stool, he declined a seventh round. He had quit.

In the sweaty aftermath, Tyson was gracious to his opponent and stayed around to browse his own psyche one last time. "I'm a peasant," he said. "At one point, I thought life was about acquiring things. Life is totally about losing everything."

Asked what he might do next, Tyson said, "I'm going to look into doing missionary work." Maybe in Africa, maybe Bosnia. He was unsure how he would pay his bills. Maybe he just wouldn't. He was sure, he said, only that the ferocity was gone. "I don't have it in me anymore," he said. "I can't even kill the bugs in my house."

—*David Remnick*

DEPT. OF SECOND ACTS
TO BOLDLY GO



An unflinchingly critical review of Kirstie Alley's show "Fat Actress" was delivered from an unexpected quarter recently: the desk of Leonard Nimoy, who described the program as "ghastly" and "hypocritical." "Have you seen it?" Nimoy asked, speaking by phone from his Los Angeles home. "She trumpets the fact that she is a fat actress and shows herself very glamorously posed and so on; but then the first thing you see is her crying and wailing and pounding on the floor and swearing, while guzzling food and talking about losing weight. The message that she is sending is, on the one hand, I am fat and it's O.K., and, on the other hand, it is just terrible. The taste is awful, awful, awful; and so is the level of humor, if you can call it that."

Nimoy and Alley have, as it turns out, a special bond: Alley made her acting début in "Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan," which was released in 1982. She played Lieutenant Saavik, a half-Vulcan cadet whom Spock had mentored at the Starfleet Academy. Nimoy's interest in Alley's latest project, however, springs not from lingering issues of intergalactic kinship but from the fact that he has recently been making his own artistic statements about what he refers to as "full-bodied people." Nimoy, who is seventy-four and has been exhibiting his fine-art photography since the early seventies, has a show up at the Bonni Benrubi Gallery, in New York, entitled "Maximum Beauty," which includes a handful of group portraits of nudes whose proportions are considerably more ample than Kirstie Alley's.

The idea for "Maximum Beauty," Nimoy explained, came when he was showing some work at a photography seminar. "I had been working on female figures for a number of years, and a lady approached me and said, 'Your work seems to deal with mostly a particular body type,'" he said. "She was about three hundred pounds—a very large lady, a very lovely lady, and she came to our studio and we photographed her." The resulting shots—in which the model's face is partially veiled, though her marmoreal mass is not—are not in the show, which consists of a series of images Nimoy took of members of a burlesque troupe in San Francisco who call themselves the Fat Bottom Revue.

Nimoy tends to draw upon religious symbolism and imagery in his work; in 2002, he published a controversial monograph entitled "Shekhina," on the manifestation on earth of God's female aspect, according to mystical Judaism. (Some Jewish groups were offended by Nimoy's photographs of nude women wearing a tallis and tefillin, and the Jewish Telegraphic Agency wrote that the flap "echoes the battles that swirled over Mapplethorpe.")

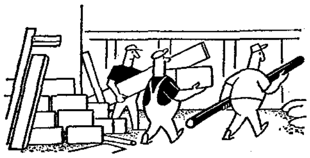
In "Maximum Beauty," however, the photographer's references are more secular. "There is an homage to a famous pair of images by Helmut Newton, in which high-fashion models walk toward the camera first clothed and then naked," he explained. Nimoy revisited another famous fashion photograph, by Herb Ritts, which shows Cindy Crawford, Naomi Campbell, Linda Evangelista, Christy Turlington, and Tatjana Patitz, all of them nude, huddled attractively together on the floor. Nimoy's women look as winsome as, if significantly sturdier than, Ritts's originals. "They were very proud, very comfortable, and there was no self-consciousness whatsoever," Nimoy said of the photo session. "I came to admire them."

The photographs are intended to be a commentary upon the wider culture's fetish with thinness, Nimoy explained; he had a sister-in-law who was obese and died young. Nimoy's personal experience of full-bodiedness is limited. "My biggest weight issue was maybe fifteen or eighteen years ago, when I quit smoking and put on ten pounds," he said. "I went from a size-32 waist to a size-36 waist."

The previous evening, Nimoy said, he had had a celebratory dinner with William Shatner at a Los Angeles steakhouse. "Our birthdays are four days apart," Nimoy said. He added that Shatner, who became noticeably hefty a few years ago, was looking trimmer. "I was very light on the potatoes, and had no bread," Nimoy said. "I try to watch my weight, because I don't want to be running to the tailor regularly, letting my pants out, then taking them in, then letting them out. I try to stay within my wardrobe."

—*Rebecca Mead*

URBAN RENEWAL
STADIA MANIA



A couple of weeks ago, after parliamentary maneuvering killed the Mayor's plans for a football stadium on Manhattan's West Side, a lament went up, among city planners and real-estate developers, that it had become impossible to get things done in New York. Oh, for the bulldozer days. So it was a little startling when, just a week later, the city announced deals with the Mets and the Yankees to build new ballparks next door to their current ones. This brought to four the number of giant sports projects in store for the city, the other two being an arena for the Nets in Brooklyn and an eighty-thousand-seat racetrack for NASCAR on Staten Island. So much for impossible, or even hard.

Between stadium announcements, a new voice inadvertently joined the fray of those in favor and those opposed, though the combatants were hardly listening. Ry Cooder released an album, a song cycle called "Chávez Ravine," about the Mexican-American neighborhood in Los Angeles whose residents were evicted in the fifties to make way for Dodger Stadium. (The Dodgers, of course, went to L.A. because they had failed to get their dream stadium, a Buckminster Fuller dome, built in Brooklyn.) Cooder's album, which, in the spirit of his "Buena Vista Social Club" project, features old musicians from East L.A., chronicles this buried bit of Angeleno history from the point of view of participants real and imagined: the public-housing official and HUAC victim Frank Wilkinson, the power broker and red-baiter Fritz Burns, a demolition man, a zoot-suiter, a parking attendant's ghost. There is also a "space *vato*"—a space dude—who, hearing some pachuco pop on the radio of his spaceship, touches down in Chávez Ravine, looking for fun. The idea is that this was a blessed little slum, "a poor man's Shangri-La," where life was good and music filled the air, until the muddleheaded utopians and greedy grandees plowed it all under.

As for New York's stadium dramas, consulting Cooder is a bit like calling in that space *vato*. For one thing, Cooder is an L.A. cat. For another, none of the projects proposed here would do to a neighborhood what Dodger Stadium did to the Ravine, though the Nets' plan, which envisions a monolithic entertainment complex along Atlantic Avenue, calls for the demolition of some residential buildings. (The Yankees will take over a park; the Mets a parking lot; NASCAR an abandoned oil-tank farm.) Still, sometimes a space *vato*, if he has a little Jane Jacobs in him, helps you see the big picture.

"I got the idea that there was some kind of controversy about all this in New York," Cooder said last week, from his home in Santa Monica. "Is it all driven by this multi-use concept, where they have the corporate boxes and the restaurants and the stores? In other words, a mall?"

The previous day in L.A. had been a kind of Cooder Day. He was the beneficiary of one of those civic proclamations, complete with a ceremony downtown: "WHEREAS, Ry Cooder is a Los Angeles-based musician of international renown . . ." The honor, and the sincere-seeming spirit behind it, surprised him.

The levelling of Chávez Ravine was, in the beginning, well-intentioned, if misguided. It was supposed to clear the way for housing projects, but the city basically gave the land to Walter O'Malley instead, and soon the Ravine's former residents were referring to the locations of their old homes according to the geography of the ballpark: right field, third base, bullpen.

"Somebody's taken something from you, they give you something back," Cooder said. One of the things that get taken, he added, is "the music that comes from this way of life—pachuco swing, and rhythm and blues, and jazz—and the things people do because they have a taste and a talent for it. There is no talent involved in buying big cheeseburgers and big Cokes, going to the mall.

"What do you need another mall for?" he went on. "In L.A., that's all they ever have built. They cut up the Brown Derby. They cut up all those restaurants that looked like funny things, like pigs or hot dogs. They tear down every coffee shop they can find. You talk about heritage, man, it was there. They find a bowling alley, chop it down. Interesting old apartment house, chop it down. Then they give back stuff with zero content, buildings with no past, a useless present, and no future at all. Where nobody is going to get together, where no memories will be created or associations made, or good times. They will simply be directing you into the act of taking your credit card out of your wallet, with that glazed look on your face. So, you see, I'm not a fan of that. You can put the stadium into that category. Some may argue and say no, the stadium's for fun and it's a social place and you get together and eat hot dogs—I don't know what you do in a stadium, because I never go, see."

He wasn't sure whether this critique would travel. "New York is a whole different environment," he said. "And I'm not a sports fan, you know. I don't even like crowds. They make me nervous. I like quiet."

—*Nick Paumgarten*

THE FINANCIAL PAGE
COPS AND ROBBERS

Allen Wolfson was a Renaissance man, in his own way. Between 1999 and 2002, he was involved in the stock-market rise of at least seven companies. Freedom Surf made wet suits and surf apparel. Learner's World ran a day-care center. Stem Genetics did stem-cell research. Rollerball International made inline skates. Hytk produced and transported natural gas. The only thing connecting these companies was Allen Wolfson—that, and the fact that they were scams.

Some people, like Andrew Fastow, the former chief financial officer of Enron, can con investors out of tens of millions of dollars while working at one company. Wolfson had to be more industrious. He had to keep moving. He was what's called a stock promoter—someone who takes shares in a worthless company, inflates their price by means of chicanery and hype, and then dumps them before the price collapses. For example, he made Freedom Surf's stock octuple in two months by directing a broker to jack up the price with false bids. And he and his son used a front company in Laos as part of a scheme to persuade foreign investors that companies like Stem Genetics and NCI Holdings were the next big thing. Never mind that Stem Genetics had no laboratory and no scientists, and that NCIH's only office was a mailbox.

The woods have always been full of Wolfsons, but, thanks to the combination of the Internet, cheap telecommunications, and a flood of new, inexperienced investors, these are especially fertile times for fraud. When the big corporate scandals came to light in 2001 and 2002, the Securities and Exchange Commission stepped up its enforcement efforts; between 2001 and 2003, its caseload rose by thirty per cent, and its haul, in fines and disgorgements, quadrupled. Some people are even going to jail—in 2003, Wolfson was sent away for securities and wire fraud. Still, the S.E.C. is struggling to keep up.

Some people don't consider this to be a problem. As the shock over Enron and WorldCom has faded, many corporate Americans have decided that the regulators are too meddlesome. Some are understandably frustrated by the money and time it takes to comply with new accounting and auditing rules, and unhappy with what they consider the S.E.C.'s excessive prosecutorial zeal. So when the White House announced, last month, that the conservative lawmaker Christopher Cox, who has a record of supporting securities deregulation, would be the S.E.C.'s new chairman, it seemed to be a sign that the commission intends to lighten up.

No such luck. While Cox is unlikely to put any new regulations on the books, he seems committed to sniffing out and punishing fraud—which is the S.E.C.'s most important task right now. Scandals may tend to provoke a regulatory overreaction, and some of the agency's recent edicts and actions (like its quest to regulate hedge funds) have seemed a bit too fussy. Businesses need to be free to take risks; it shouldn't be a felony to be wrong. But investors also need some assurance that companies' financial statements and forecasts bear some resemblance to reality.

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

The current system depends in large part on an assortment of short sellers (who bet on companies' stock prices to decline), Web sites, and investigative journalists to sniff out scams. But this vigilante system doesn't work very well. Investors often discount short sellers' criticism of a company as purely self-interested (which, of course, it sometimes is), and the ensuing tug-of-war over share price ends only when the bad guys let go of the rope. Investors also don't have the tools for uncovering fraud that the S.E.C. has. We don't depend on private citizens to stop street crime. Why should we depend on them to stop crime on the Street?

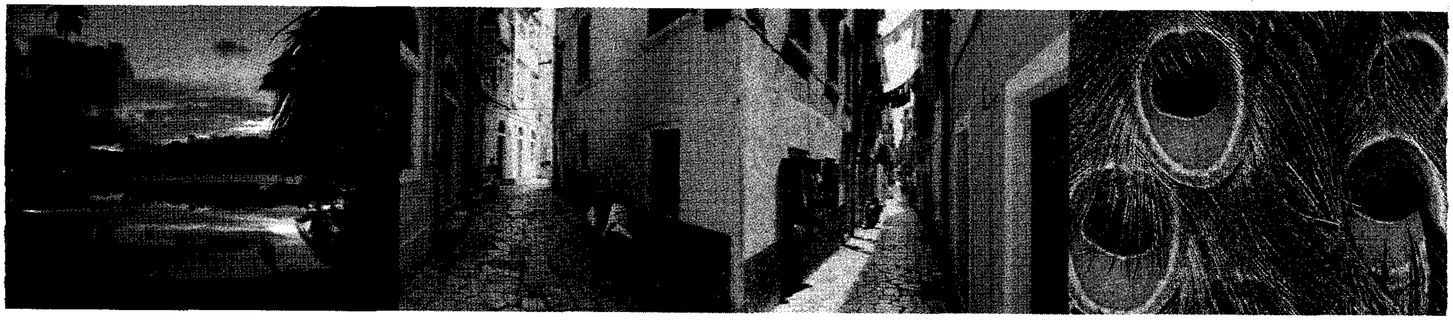
Fighting fraud is a matter not so much of making new rules or regulations as of enforcing the ones already on the books. The S.E.C. can suspend trading in stocks, revoke a company's registration, and bar crooks from serving as corporate officers—measures that can be taken before fraud does too much harm. Fraud at smaller companies may be less costly, and affect fewer people, than at places like Enron, but it is also more common and more insidious. The small-cap market, after all, is where most new companies go to raise money. Corruption tars the good ones along with the bad and potentially steers billions of dollars to empty enterprises.

Spotting fraud isn't always easy. But, as one hedge-fund manager said last week, "there's a lot of low-hanging fruit." The problem is that the S.E.C. has never had enough people or money to go after it all. A call for more law enforcement is usually as uncontroversial as Miss Michigan's declaration, in "Roger & Me," that she is "for employment," but somehow this doesn't hold true for the S.E.C. Even though in the past couple of years it was given more money and more people—that's why it was able to bring more cases—it is still outmanned and outgunned.

Lower turnover would help, too. A little institutional memory goes a long way, as the fund manager pointed out: "You see the same guys running similar scams again and again." Wolfson, for instance, was convicted of bank fraud in the seventies and arrested for a stock-promotion scheme in the nineties. (The charges were dropped.) But even though his name appeared in many of the official filings of the companies he was promoting, apparently no one noticed or cared. We could use a watch list, a bucket-shop version of Megan's Law. No reason to let bad stock drive out good money.

—*James Surowiecki*

WORLD
TRAVEL &
TOURISM
COUNCIL



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A BLUEPRINT FOR NEW TOURISM

Since Marshall McLuhan described the modern world as a "global village," it has taken decades to grasp the ramifications of billions of people milling about on one planet. But who's tracking these immense migrations of pleasure seekers and business travelers? What sort of impact do their travels have on national and local economies? Where is global travel and tourism heading?

By Paul Burnham Finney

Finding the answers, many quite surprising, is the business of the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), a London-based organization dedicated to making sense out of the warp and woof of international travel. Its elite network of more than a hundred chairmen, chief executives, and presidents who run the world's most prominent and influential tourism companies recently assembled in New Delhi, India, for the 5th Global Travel & Tourism Summit, in what WTTC president Jean-Claude Baumgarten characterized as a "fantastic density of power."

Government ministers from five continents and travel and business leaders of global industry, as well as delegates and journalists discussed constructive strategies that will enable travel and tourism to create jobs in the industry and promote long-term prosperity for the next decade.

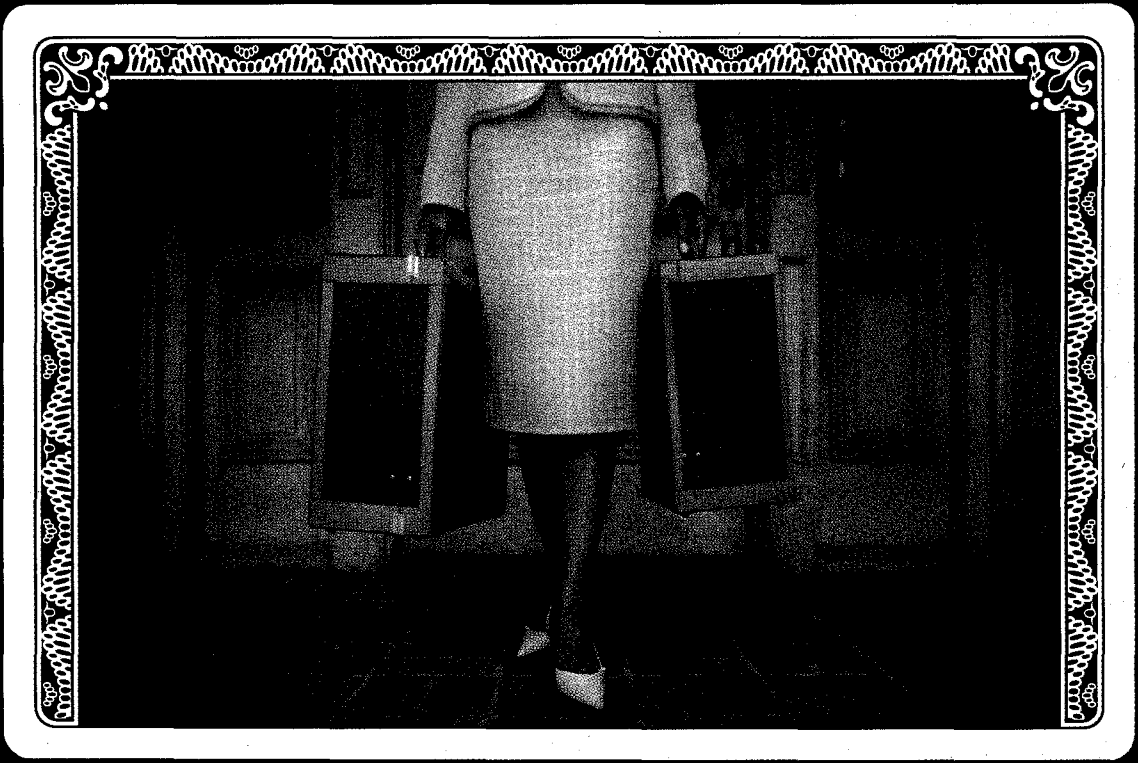
By WTTC's estimate, the travel industry's impact on economies worldwide is so great that some 174 countries now consume and invest more than six trillion dollars annually on tourism.

AN ESTEEMED MEMBERSHIP. "When Jim Robinson [former Chairman and CEO of American Express] started WTTC fifteen years ago," says WTTC president Jean-Claude Baumgarten, "it was with just a few chief executives. It suddenly dawned on us that we were the biggest industry in the world and no one recognized it: they didn't understand the link between travel, tourism, and world economics. So," he says, "the best way to get the message across was to do the research and allow the world to connect the dots."

J. W. (Bill) Marriott joined ten years ago: "It was a no-brainer for me," says the Chairman and CEO of the company that bears his name. He uses WTTC research in large part to influence his development decisions. But he also lobbies governments to pay more attention to travel and tourism. The government that does the worst job of understanding this economic relationship, according to Marriott? "The United States," he says, "and it's a shame . . . . Especially when the dollar is so weak against many foreign currencies."

According to Mark Conroy, CEO of Radisson Seven Seas Cruises, "WTTC is also about our responsibility in educating not only the traveler, but the destinations he's traveling to, and their enlightened self-interest. Out of that," he continues, "come long-term relationships that can build not only companies, but strengthen ties between countries." Marilyn Carlson Nelson, CEO of The Carlson Companies, adds, "We have a huge global responsibility helping to develop nations by raising living standards, providing entry-level jobs and lifetime careers." Nelson continues to lobby WTTC members to be stewards of the environment, protectors of cultural heritage, and of human rights. Adds Raymond Bickson, Managing Director and CEO of Taj Hotels, Resorts and Palaces, "this is the (travel) equivalent of the G-8 summit of world leaders."

—Peter Greenberg, Travel Editor of the Travel Channel and NBC's TODAY Show



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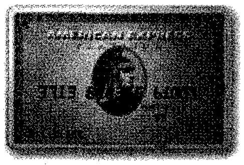


A WORLD OF SERVICE℠

> " We needed to put out the mantra that tourism's the largest industry in the world. "
>
> –James D. Robinson III, Chairman Emeritus, WTTC

Since its formation in 1990, the WTTC has been working to help countries and regions develop the necessary framework and resources to achieve growth. "The WTTC started with the belief that governments should be paying attention to the travel industry," says Sir Ian Prosser, retired chairman of InterContinental Hotels and WTTC. Adds American Express Vice Chairman Jonathan S. Linen, who's also the current WTTC Vice Chairman, "We wanted to bring industry leaders together to encourage adequate investment in infrastructure, develop training programs, and make the taxation climate more hospitable to growth."

"We've found that in developed markets, tourism fuels growth beyond the traditional travel industry by spreading through a country's whole economy," as Harvey Golub, former chairman of both American Express and the WTTC, puts it. "For emerging markets, it's a relatively fast way to create jobs and attract foreign investment."

Incredible India
AN ECONOMY ON THE RISE

The WTTC paid homage to India, a once-sleeping South Asian giant with world-class tourism aspirations, by holding its recent annual summit in New Delhi. Today, the fourth largest economy in the world is also an energized host to millions of international travelers eager to see its spectacular sights like the Taj Mahal, the pristine beaches of Goa, its Rajasthan tigers, and to visit this wellness destination specializing in Ayurveda, yoga, and other exotic therapies in the land where Buddha was born.

In 2000 the WTTC recommended ten improvements to its government that would enhance Indian tourism—from expanded air service to updated tourist facilities and the burnishing of India's marketing image. With most recommendations now realized, India's visitor count has soared, boosting receipts from $3.3 billion to $4.9 billion.

"One of the most heartening developments over the past year has been in aviation," according to a recent International Tourism Exchange report. "Even the national carrier Air India is starting its own budget partner, Air India Express." India's hotels "have never had it so good," the analysis continues. It has led to the heady expansion of the Taj Hotels, Resorts and Palaces, India's largest luxury chain ranging from former palaces to private island resorts around the world. *–PBF*

TRAVEL BITS AND BYTES

The Council commissions research from Oxford Economic Forecasting, headquartered in England, that breaks out and interprets numbers like a country's growth rates, per capita income, and job creation, making estimates on how the numbers impact travel and tourism economies.

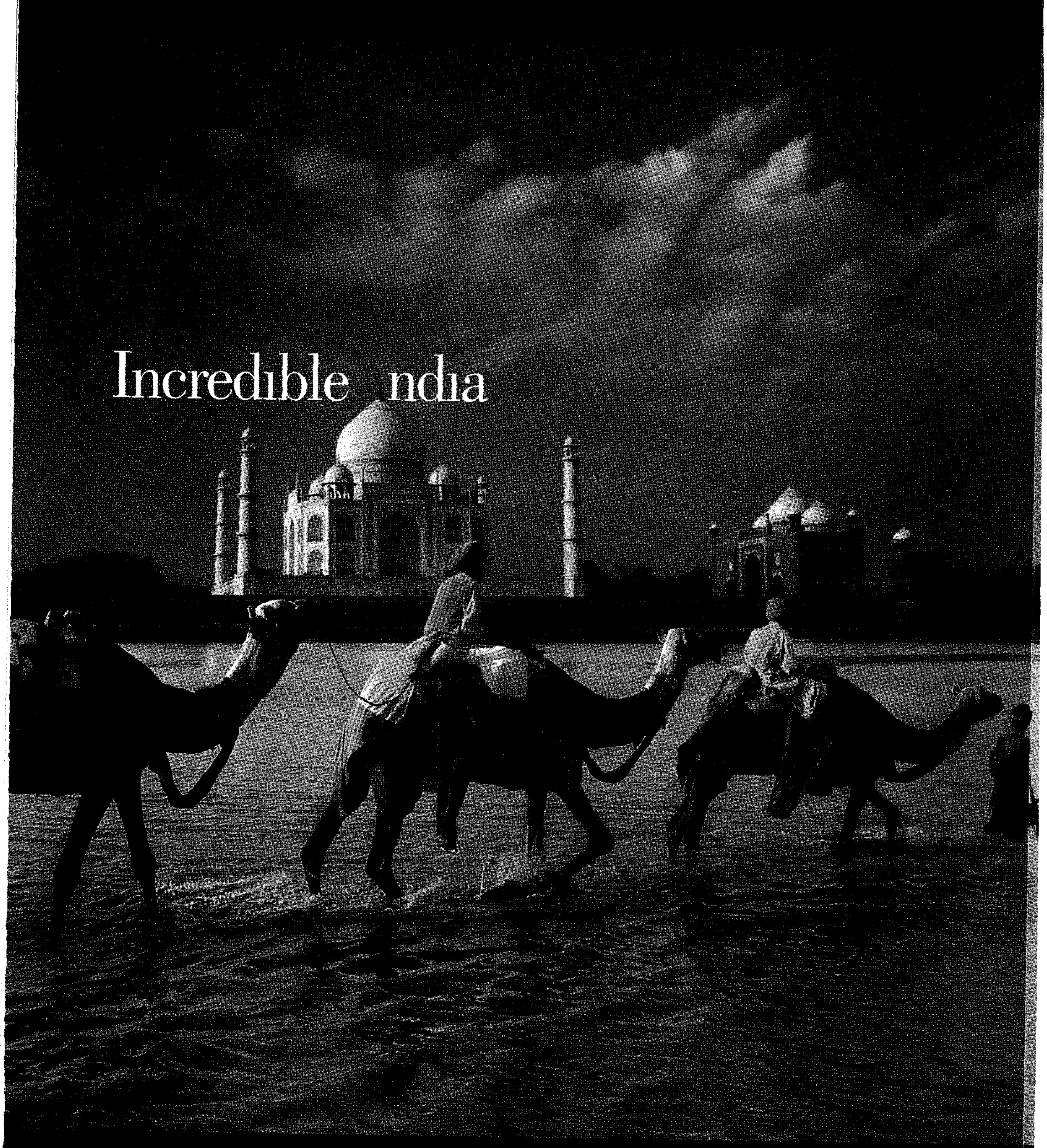
So-called Travel Satellite Accounting reports draw on information about tourist expenditures worldwide such as whether purchases were domestic or international, imported or exported; whether they were made before or after trips; or how a new bridge has impacted bringing two countries together and potentially altered travel patterns.

Some Council findings are startling. For example, Iran and Sudan have greatly increased expenditures to encourage tourism, and Cambodia and Albania are among the fastest-growing business travel economies in 2005. Good news for consumers: India and Brazil are currently providing the best value for the money. And the twenty-three national economies in the Caribbean make it the most tourism intensive region in the world.

"Increased globalization is quietly making its mark on the economies of all continents," as current WTTC Chairman and

TOP TO BOTTOM: © JACKIE BLACK; © RICK GOMEZ/CORBIS; © GALLO IMAGES/CORBIS

a monument to love, *an ode in white.*
a caravan of colours, *bathed in light.*
a river of passion, *a timeless tide.*
the colours of india, *an incredible sight.*



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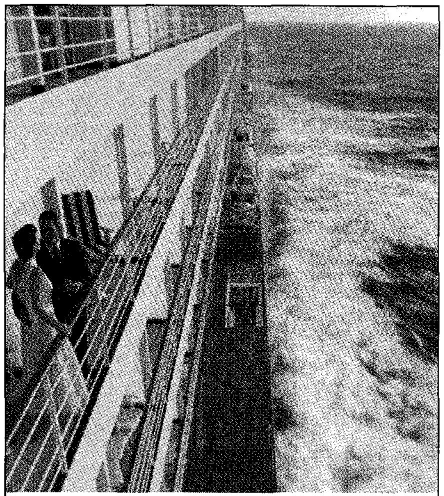

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> **“ Good news for consumers: India and Brazil are currently providing the best value for the money. ”**

Chairman Emeritus of Carey International, Vincent A. Wolfington, noted in a recent progress report, “In 2005 alone, travel and tourism is expected to account for approximately 221 million jobs with prospects for that figure to reach 269 million in 2015.”

But in our problem-plagued world, travel of course is not immune to difficulties and trends not necessarily of its own making. At WTTC's recent summit, there were differing opinions on how to deal with such current issues as the South Asian tsunami's aftermath and the escalating cost of jet fuel.

Among the most prominent newsmakers at the New Delhi forum were the world's two population giants, China and India, both enjoying a burst of travel fever. However, in its box score of the ten countries expected to grow the fastest in the next fifteen years, tiny Montenegro tucked away in the Balkans received equal billing with China and India. In fact, it beat all other countries' comparative growth rates by a nose.

ONWARD AND UPWARD

“Global tourism is set to grow by 4.6 per cent annually over the next ten years,” notes WTTC's Baumgarten. “Behind this growth are two longstanding travel giants, the United States and Europe, but the booming economies in China, India, and other Asian countries will be driving growth in the coming decades.”

What will most alter the travel landscape in the years ahead—beyond more money in the pockets of tourists? The main engines, according to Baumgarten, will be advances in technology, more fuel-efficient jets and cars, better-trained airline and hotel service staffs, and close cooperation between travel companies and government tourist organizations.

“We turned the corner in 2004 and it's full steam ahead for tourism in many countries and regions around the world,” Baumgarten has said. “Much of the pent-up demand from three previous years of terrorism, war, and health concerns has been released in a record level of travel and tourism demand,” he said. “Consumers and business travelers have resumed traveling in massive numbers, and we expect the rebound to continue at a sustainable pace.”

As a dynamic, expanding industry, travel is entering a new phase of nonstop change. “Low-cost air carriers have made travel available to more people than ever before,” says American Express's Linen. “At the same time, traditional airlines and tour operators are offering a broader range of travel options from adventure travel to luxurious spa vacations.”

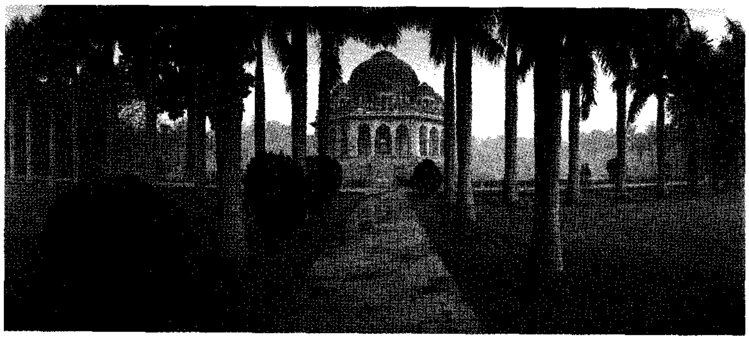
“I've always believed that travel should be accessible to as many people as possible,” adds Baumgarten. “Increasingly, that's happening today.”

TOP 10 TRAVEL ECONOMIES TO WATCH

(2004–2015 Annualized Real Growth, Percent)

1. **MONTENEGRO** 2. **CHINA** 3. **INDIA** 4. **RÉUNION** 5. **CROATIA** 6. **SUDAN**
7. **VIETNAM** 8. **LAOS** 9. **CZECH REPUBLIC** 10. **GUADALOUPE**

WHEN IN INDIA . . .



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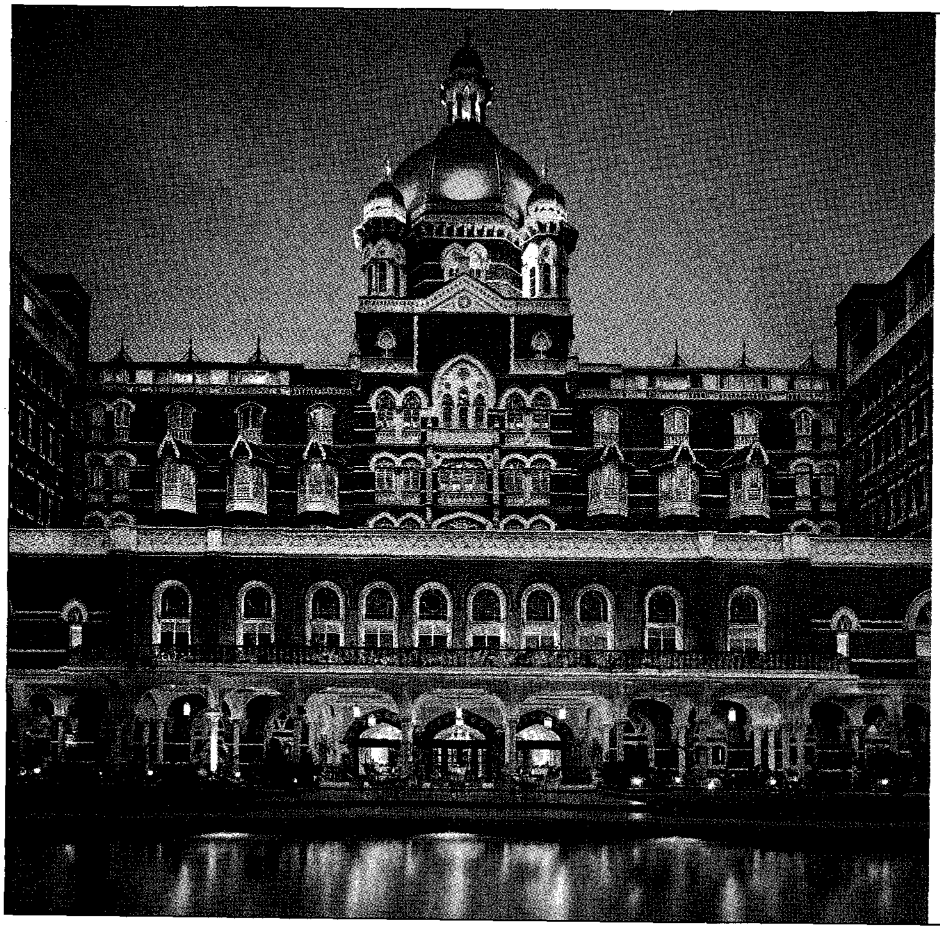
Always fascinated by the vastness of India, and how so much of it has yet to be touched by Western travelers, travel writer Peter Greenberg shares his five musts-to-do when you go:

- **Kerala.** Nothing beats this densely populated region's diversity. Visit the beaches near Kovalam, and the backwaters where the elephants play; snake boats race and Kathakali performances (stylized dances with religious and mythological references) can be seen.
- **Jaipur.** Colorful capital of the equally colorful Rajasthan emotes peace and tranquility. It redefines the word "spa." Check out the Rambagh Palace or the Oberoi Rajvilas resort.
- **Hyderabad.** Most first-time visitors miss this stop and shouldn't. See the ancient kingdoms once built on the fortunes of diamonds. Also a great place to shop for pearls.
- **Mumbai and Goa.** Use Mumbai (a.k.a. Bombay) as your hub to get to the south Konkan coast and the beaches of Goa, some of the world's finest.
- **Taj Mahal.** A wonder of the world made more wonderful by the specific time of day you visit. Arrive before dawn to have your quiet moment with this marble, amber, and turquoise tribute to a special romance. (It's now open each month during moonlit nights.) *–PG*



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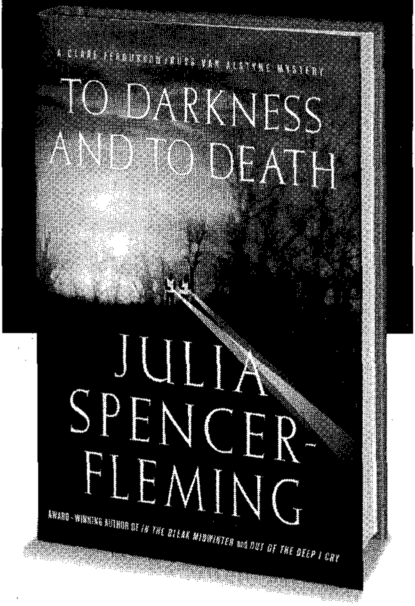
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ANNALS OF EDUCATION

GOD AND COUNTRY

A college that trains young Christians to be politicians.

BY HANNA ROSIN

In the last days before the 2004 Presidential election, Patrick Henry College, in Purcellville, Virginia, excused all its students from classes, because so many of them were working on campaigns or wanted to go to the swing states to get out the vote for George W. Bush. Elisa Muench, a junior, was interning in the White House's Office of Strategic Initiatives, which is overseen by Karl Rove. On Election Day, she stood on the South Lawn with the rest of the White House staff to greet the President and Mrs. Bush as they returned from casting their votes in Texas. Muench cheered along with everyone else, but she was worried. Her office was "keeping up contact with Karl," and she knew that the early exit polls were worse than expected. Through the night, she watched the results, as Bush's electoral-vote total began to rise. The next morning, after Kerry conceded, she stood in the crowd at the Bush campaign's victory party, in clothes she'd been wearing all night, and "cried and screamed and laughed, it was so overwhelming."

I found Muench in the Patrick Henry cafeteria at lunchtime one day a few months later. She is twenty-one years old and has clear, bright hazel eyes and sandy-brown hair that she straightens and then curls with an iron. Patrick Henry is a Christian college, though it is not affiliated with any denomination, and it gives students guidelines on "glorifying God with their appearance." During class hours, the college enforces a "business casual" dress code designed to prepare the students for office life—especially for offices in Washington, D.C., fifty miles to the east, where almost all the students have internships, with Republican politicians or in conservative think tanks. When I met Muench, she was wearing a cardigan and a navy skirt. The boys in the cafeteria all had neatly trimmed hair, and wore suits or khakis and button-down shirts; girls wore slacks or skirts just below the knee, and sweaters or blouses. Most said grace before eating, though they did it silently and discreetly, with a quick bow of the head.

Muench told me that she loved working for Rove—answering the phone and having a senator on the line, meeting Andrew Card, the chief of staff ("He's a nice guy"), and Vice-President Dick Cheney ("He's really funny"). She took a bus from Patrick Henry at six every morning to arrive at the White House by seven-thirty. Her work with Rove, she told me, affirmed her belief that he was a political genius.

In her sophomore year, Muench had become the first—and, so far, the only—woman at Patrick Henry to run for a student-government executive office, when she entered the race for vice-president. Campaigns are unusually intense at Patrick Henry; candidates hire pollsters and form slates. One of Muench's friends, Matthew du Mée, was on an opposing slate, and the race caused a strain. (Both lost.) Muench's internship with Rove has given her a reputation, much envied on campus, as someone worth knowing. The day we spoke, a sophomore leaned across the table and asked, "How much do you make, starting salary, working on the Hill?"

"I'm not sure," Muench said.

"I heard one of the graduates working for Joe Pitts is making, like, thirty-two thousand dollars. That's not that much." (Pitts is a Republican congressman.)

"Well, it's not too bad if you're a single person," Muench told him.

"Do you have any intentions of running for office?" the sophomore asked.

"Yes," she said.

At that moment, Muench's cell phone rang. It was Cheney's office, calling to thank her for volunteering for the Vice-President's Christmas party, and to ask if she would allow her name to be put on a list for future openings.

Muench, like eighty-five per cent of the students at Patrick Henry, was homeschooled, in her case in rural Idaho. Homeschoolers are not the most obvious raw material for a college whose main mission, since its founding, five years ago, has been to train a new generation of Christian politicians. Politics, after all, is the most social of professions, and many students arrive at Patrick Henry having never shared a classroom with anyone other than their siblings. In conservative circles, however, homeschoolers are considered something of an élite, rough around the edges but pure—in their focus, capacity for work, and ideological clarity—a view that helps explain why the Republican establishment has placed its support behind Patrick Henry, and why so many conservative politicians are hiring its graduates.

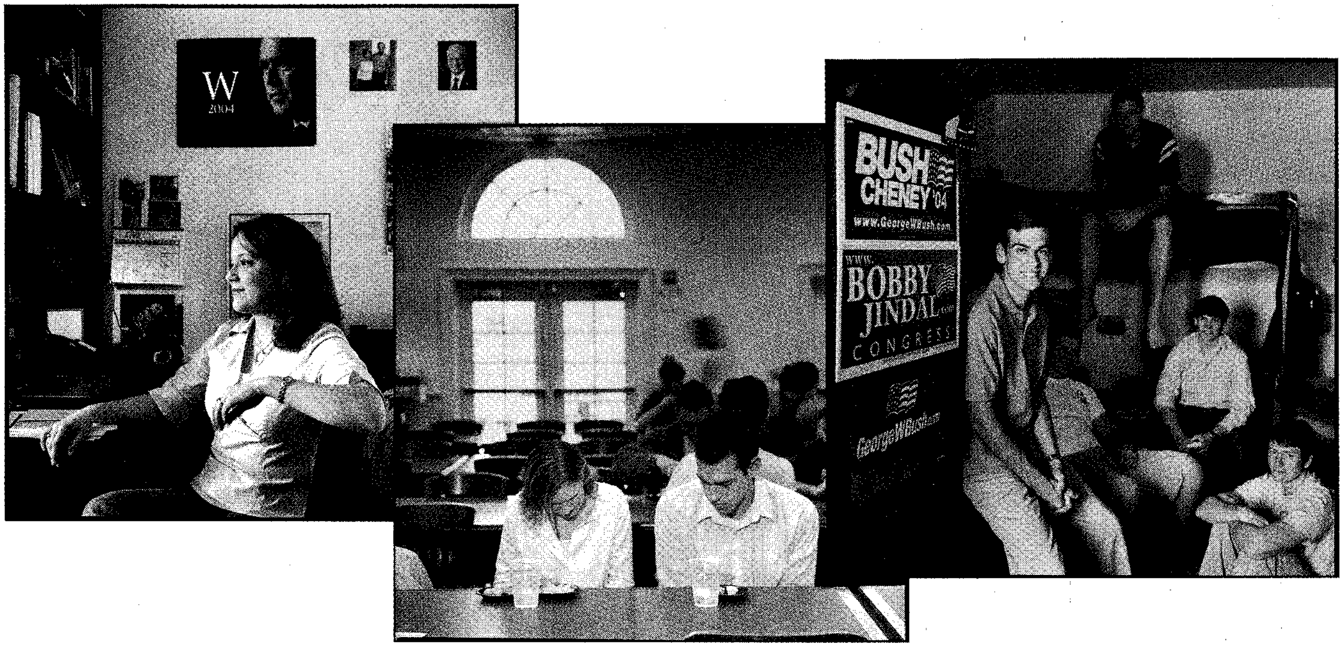
Patrick Henry's president, Michael Farris, is a lawyer and minister who has worked for Christian causes for decades. He founded the school after getting requests from two constituencies: homeschooling parents and conservative congressmen. The parents would ask him where they could find a Christian college with a "courtship" atmosphere, meaning one where dating is regulated and subject to parental approval. The congressmen asked him where they could find homeschoolers as interns and staffers, "which I took to be shorthand for 'someone who shares my values,'" Farris said. "And I knew they didn't want a fourteen-year-old kid." So he set out to build what he calls the Evangelical Ivy League, and what the students call Harvard for Homeschoolers.

Farris is fifty-three but seems younger, with thick brown hair and a slightly amused expression. He and his wife, Vickie, began to homeschool their children (they have ten) in 1982, and the next year he founded the Home School Legal Defense Association, to challenge state laws that made it difficult to homeschool children. In 1993, he ran, unsuccessfully, for lieutenant governor of Virginia. At the time, evangelicals had yet to emerge as a national political force; many preferred to keep their distance from secular culture, which is one reason that Patrick Henry parents educated their children at home. Since then, Rove has built an entire campaign around mobilizing Christian conservatives. In a speech at the American Enterprise Institute after the 2000 election, he said that the President had lost the popular vote because fewer than expected "white, evangelical Protestants" had come to the polls. One of Rove's principal strategies for victory in 2004 was working to increase this group's numbers, and on Election Day four million more evangelicals voted than in 2000.

Farris's manifesto for the school, "The Joshua Generation," embraces the Rove principle: the "Moses generation," he wrote, had "left Egypt," and now it was time for their children to "take the land." Farris is the author of nine nonfiction books and three novels, all with Christian themes, and in them he warns against "MTV, Internet porn, abortion, homosexuality, greed and accomplished selfishness"; he calls public schools "godless monstrosities." But students are not expected to avoid the secular world entirely. Farris told them at chapel recently that one day "an Academy Award winner will walk down the aisle to accept his trophy. On his way, he'll get a cell-phone call; it will be the President, who happens to be his old Patrick Henry roommate, calling to congratulate him."

When the Farrises began homeschooling their kids, they were one of only a few thousand American families who did so. Now about a million and a half children, as many as two-thirds of whom are thought to be evangelicals, are taught at home. Farris bought the land for the Patrick Henry campus with four hundred thousand dollars from the Home School Legal Defense Association's reserves; he raised the rest of the money for the college, nine million dollars, from parents and donors such as Tim LaHaye, the author of the best-selling "Left Behind" series. LaHaye's portrait hangs in the main hall.

Farris was competing against estab-

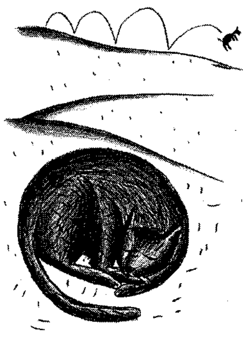


Elisa Muench, Christy Ross, and Matthew du Mée came to Patrick Henry after being homeschooled. Photographs by Steve Pyke.

lished Christian schools such as Bob Jones University, which sells textbooks and videos for homeschoolers. Some families, though, believe that a traditionalist approach to Christian education is limiting, and Patrick Henry was designed to appeal both to the protectiveness of these parents and to their ambitions, promising an "authentic Christian environment" as well as preparation for "careers of influence" in politics.

Three times a year, the White House chooses a hundred students for a three-month internship. Patrick Henry, with only three hundred students, has taken between one and five of the spots in each of the past five years—roughly the same as Georgetown. Other Patrick Henry students volunteer in the White House. Tim Goeglein, the Administration's liaison to the evangelical community, said that the numbers reflect the abilities of the Patrick Henry students, who "have learned a way to integrate faith and action." For the White House, it is also a way to reach out to its base while building a network of young political operatives.

Of the school's sixty-one graduates through the class of 2004, two have jobs in the White House; six are on the staffs of conservative members of Congress; eight are in federal agencies; and one helps Senator Rick Santorum, of Pennsylvania, and his wife, Karen, homeschool their six children. Two are at the F.B.I., and another worked for the Coalition Provisional Authority, in Iraq. Last year, the college began offering a major in strategic intelligence; the students learn the history of covert operations and take internships that allow them to graduate with a security clearance.



All seniors do a directed research project that is designed, Farris told me, to mimic the work that an entry-level staffer would be assigned. "A whole lot of elected members of Congress started off as Hill staffers," Farris said. "If you want to train a new generation of leaders, you have to get in on the ground floor."

One afternoon in March, Matthew du Mée sat at a counsels' table in the Virginia Supreme Court. Behind him was an audience of two hundred people, including many of Patrick Henry's donors. Du Mée and another senior, Rayel Papke, were representing one side of a mock case against a team from Balliol College, at Oxford University. The details of the case, which involved an international treaty, were fictitious, but Farris had persuaded three of the court's justices to preside. Papke had got up at 1 A.M. to prepare. Du Mée was calmer; as he waited for the debate to begin, he said, "The only help I need is the Lord's."

Du Mée is twenty-two years old but, like many homeschooled boys, can seem both younger and older. He is tall, with an angular face and ears that stick out a bit. His hair usually bears the fresh imprints of a comb, like a schoolboy's or a senator's. When the round began, he was both deliberate and aggressive, and he deployed legal jargon with ease: he reminded me of a youthful version of Theodore Olson, Bush's former Solicitor General. Each team had to answer questions from the justices about dozens of legal precedents; du Mée seemed to have all the decisions memorized.

Last year, two Patrick Henry teams flew to Oxford for a mock trial that turned on the intricacies of British contract law. The Oxford kids hadn't known much about Patrick Henry back then. When one of them noticed that Papke looked nervous, he said, "Don't worry, we'll get drunk tonight." Papke just smiled. Patrick Henry won; Oxford drank alone.

Faith Brobst, a former White House intern, and Christy Ross, du Mée's fiancée, who was also the debate-team captain, were at the Virginia Supreme Court, helping out. Brobst was wearing a cherry-red suit, Ross a peacock-blue one, with stockings and pumps—the uniform of Washington wives in waiting. The Oxford boys seemed to blink when they saw them. "So bright, and they match," one of them said, politely.

The judges announced that the Patrick Henry team had won, by a 3–0 decision. Don Hodel, the former president of Focus on the Family, a Christian advocacy group, who is a Patrick Henry supporter, came up and congratulated du Mée, and invited him and Ross to visit him at his home in Colorado.

At Patrick Henry, debate plays roughly the role that football does at Notre Dame. When I asked Farris why, he said, "No one ever asked George Bush or John Kerry to arm wrestle. They need these verbal-communications skills to defend their ideas. There's no training like arguing against the best minds, and then beating them." Referring to du Mée, he said, "Maybe one day he'll be the one standing before the Supreme Court, arguing to overturn Roe v. Wade."

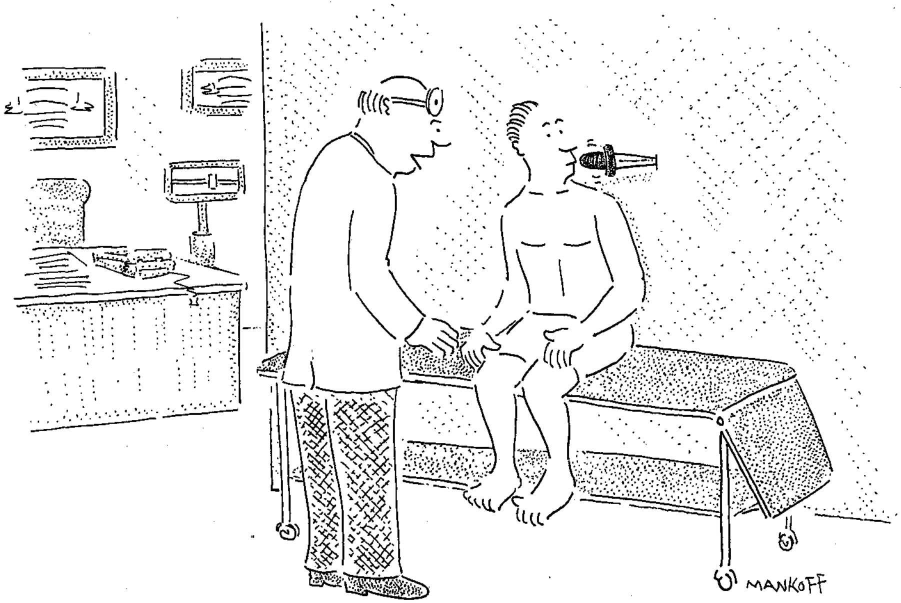
When du Mée arrived at Patrick Henry, in 2001, after being homeschooled by his parents, in Phoenix, Arizona (his father was a computer analyst, and his mother stayed at home), the school issued a press release. He'd got a perfect 1600 on the S.A.T. but ignored solicitation letters from Yale, Harvard, and Stanford, and the fact that he chose Patrick Henry was seen as a turning point for the school, which was then less than two years old. Du Mée told me, "I considered going to an Ivy League, where I could have been more of a Christian witness"—meaning an example to others who might not share his faith. But he decided that he wanted a school "more edifying to Christ."

Du Mée's transcript reads as though he had gone through a Beltway-staffer training camp. He took classes on the Presidency, on Congress, and on constitutional law. In his senior year, he volunteered at the White House one day a week, answering the telephone comment line, and he has interned twice with Representative Trent Franks, an Arizona Republican. Du Mée's first directed research project was a thirty-page evaluation of a bill giving tax credits for donations to fund private-school scholarships, which Franks had introduced. He wrote another with Ross, on reforming the U.N., complete with policy briefs.

Ross is du Mée's usual debate partner, and this year they won four of the six national tournaments they competed in. Some of the younger Patrick Henry teams make a point of taking explicitly Christian positions, such as arguing for teaching alternatives to evolution, but du Mée and Ross tend to be more subtle; they focus, instead, on issues like merit pay for teachers. They met during freshman orientation, and before they began spending "exclusive time" together, in junior year, du Mée called Ross's father to tell him. Last year, du Mée asked if he could court her by writing her father an eighteen-page single-spaced letter that began "My name is Matthew du Mée and I was a good kid."

When Ross was sixteen, she wrote in her journal, "I don't want to spend my life having crushes on different guys." She pledged to "love Christ with my whole heart and not fall in love with a guy for five years," a period that she chose after hearing a lecture that compared committing to Christ to sticking to a long-term business plan. Du Mée's courtship proposal came exactly five days before her pledge expired.

Over Christmas break, du Mée drove to Ross's house, in Evansville, Indiana, to propose in front of her parents and six siblings. She accepted, and gave him a hug—they wanted their first kiss to be at their wedding. They decided to get married right after graduation and move to Phoenix. Ross would look for a job, but only to pay back loans. Eventually, they want to adjust to living on one salary so that she can homeschool their kids. Du Mée would "really, really like to run for political office," he said. "U.S. Congress would be great." First, he's hoping for a government-relations job at a private company. The next year, he'll apply to law school. When he graduates, he'll be ready, he thinks, "to do some little state offices." The fact that he was homeschooled and keeps a running conversation with Jesus in his head does not seem to him a barrier. "It's pretty normal," he said.



"You're a lucky man—a little bit to the left and you'd be a goner."

• •

On a Wednesday afternoon, I sat in on a class on the Presidency. There were fourteen students, all of whom arrived on time and got out their laptops to take notes. Today, they were talking about Machiavelli. The professor, Robert Stacey, who has a trim ginger-colored beard and is a popular, lively teacher, pushed the students to think about Machiavelli's suggestion that leaders create fear to maintain their authority. He brought up the example of the federal raid on the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, in 1993. One student asked, "Did they really represent such a big threat to our country?"

"No, but it unified the country, in an us-versus-them sort of way," another answered.

Then Stacey moved on to Machiavelli's principle that politics is governed by conspiracies and lies. "Come on, we know politicians lie," he began. "This is a bit sensitive. How about our beloved George W. Bush? Does he deceive us with what he says in public? Does he lie?"

The students, who had been fully engaged on the subject of Machiavelli and Waco, were silent. Bush has been President since they were teen-agers, and the school newspaper's editorials never deviate from the White House position. Finally, one student said, "No, I don't think so."

Stacey didn't say anything. After a pause, the student said, "I mean, it would be nice if he didn't."

Stacey, who has a Ph.D. in government from the University of Virginia, told me that he loved Patrick Henry, because the students "really want to be here, which is very satisfying for a professor." He is an evangelical Christian, but he worries that his students sometimes revert to jargon they picked up from their parents, "that the nation's founders just fell out of Heaven, that America is a Christian Nation, capital 'C' capital 'N.' I want them to understand that these are myths, that the claims they're making are superficial." When he asks his students to defend a position, Stacey said, " 'The Bible says so' is never the answer."

Still, when students enroll at Patrick Henry, they sign a ten-part statement of faith, agreeing that, among other things, Hell is a place where "all who die outside of Christ shall be confined in conscious torment for eternity." The curriculum for the first two years follows a "Christian Classical" model—basically, Western Civ from a Biblical perspective. Students read Plato, Aristotle, Virgil, Locke, Shakespeare, Milton, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Beckett. They also study Euclidean geometry and biology; the school uses a standard science textbook, but the professor, Jennifer Gruenke, who also has a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia, tells students that the earth was created in a week. For the last two years, they switch to a "vocational" model, and receive credit for internships and research projects. Elisa Muench, for example, took a class on how to analyze polls, and is preparing a senior project on political realignments. Most of the students major in government; the few literature majors tend to be girls.

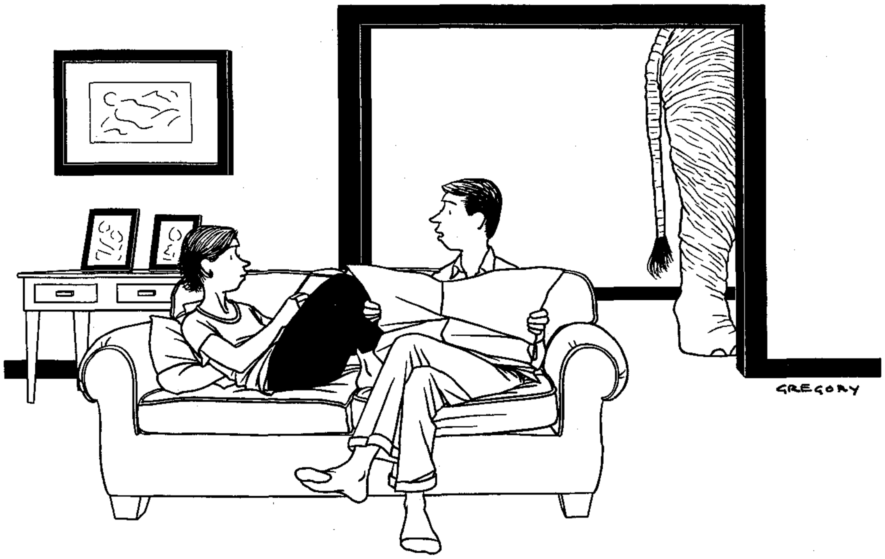
Patrick Henry's campus is small, with one main building and a group of dorms clustered around a lake; the kids call it "the fishbowl." It can be a competitive, anxious place. Many students schedule their days in fifteen-minute increments and keep daily checklists over their desks (do crunches, read Bible, take vitamins, study). "Everyone here is going for the same prize," Abby Pilgrim, a junior, told me. "Nothing here is chill."

So far, each class has lost about a fifth of its students, either because they can't keep up or because they want a less intense college experience. The S.A.T. scores are in the 1220-1410 range, and tuition and board cost around twenty thousand dollars, although some students are offered scholarships. The students are almost all white, with about a dozen who are Asian or Hispanic. At the moment, there are no African-American students, although Farris says that he is trying to recruit them through the National Black Home Educators Resource Association.

The school has to make room for a student like Farahn Morgan, a ballerina who is trying out to be a Rockette and likes to provoke her roommates by saying she's going to Victoria's Secret ("People, everyone wears a bra!"), and for a junior like Ben Adams, who sent out a nine-page e-mail to the entire student body before the spring formal reminding the girls to dress modestly. "Lust is sin," it said. "It is sin for you to tempt us. It is . . . unloving. Unsisterly. Un-Christlike." Nearly every week, minor culture wars break out on campus. One student wrote an article entitled "Why Bono May Be a Better Christian Than You." Another responded, in an outraged op-ed, that the band members "live like heathens."

Often, the campus looks like a scene from "Meet Me in St. Louis," with young men and women talking to one another through open windows, or exchanging a chaste goodbye at the downstairs door—men and women are not allowed in the living areas of each others' dorms. Girls talk about not "stumbling" a guy, the equivalent of tempting him, and resident advisers keep a close eye on them to make sure they don't wear shirts that show any bra. If they do, they'll get a friendly e-mail—"I think I saw you in dress code violation," followed by a smiley emoticon. (Not everyone takes the strictures well: one woman I spoke to would sometimes cry in the stairwell after being criticized by other girls for dressing inappropriately; she is transferring.) Smoking, drinking, and "public displays of affection in any campus building" are forbidden. Matthew du Mée, who was an R.A., told me that if he saw a boy and girl sitting too close for too long he would pull the boy aside and tell him to stop, because "the guy is supposed to be the leader in the relationship."

A faction of homeschooling parents lobbied Farris not to admit girls to the college, but he told me that he considered that an "extreme" position. "All women, moms included, benefit from a great education," he said. Men and women compete openly. When all the best papers in a constitutional-law class that Farris taught were turned in by girls—and not for the first time—Farris yelled at the boys to grow up. The new careerist code of the Joshua Generation can become a problem for the girls, however. Even the most ambitious ones, those who wake up at 3 A.M. to study, told me without reservation that as soon as they had children they would quit their jobs to raise them.



"Before interest rates get any higher, maybe we should start thinking about investing in a second elephant."

During spring break, in April, I went to see Elisa Muench at her parents' ranch, in Idaho, off a gravel road at the edge of the Camas prairie. The family has three horses, and they galloped down at the sound of Elisa's voice. In the living room, antlers and an antique gun were mounted over a piano. Around the house, I saw scattered signs of devotion: a newsletter from Focus on the Family, a pile of Christian best-sellers. Elisa's mother, Mary, who retired as a lieutenant colonel in the Army reserve, was at her one-day-a-week job as a nurse anesthetist in Clarkston, an hour and a half away. Her father, Alan, who was a surgeon in the Army, and retired as a colonel, now works full time on the ranch. While I talked to him about Elisa, her younger brother, Lee, who is fifteen years old and is being homeschooled, sat with us.

As a child, Elisa lived on Army bases in Italy and Alaska. Then, when she was twelve, her parents left the military and moved the family to the ranch. They worried about the local public schools' test scores and "social atmosphere." So they ordered textbooks and videos from a Christian publisher, and taught Elisa and her brother and sister themselves. The Muenches told Elisa that she could go to the public high school, but she thought her education was better at home and, she told me, "I liked having a Christian curriculum. I knew if I was in a biology class or something I'd just start debating them on evolution."

Elisa took part in Idaho's mock legislative session for high-school students, and was elected Speaker of the House. She read biographies of Ronald Reagan and the Bushes. On her desk at home hangs a poster that a friend made for her: "Elisa Muench, Republican, for Idaho's Senator." When she was near graduation, her mother read about Patrick Henry in a Christian magazine. They visited the school and prayed about it, and, when Elisa was offered a scholarship, they saw it as a sign that Patrick Henry was the right place for her.

At Patrick Henry, where she has hung photographs of the Bushes and the Cheneys on her walls, Elisa tries to read the Bible every day, usually in the morning before working out. She told me that in any other school she'd be considered a true conservative, which is what she considers herself, "but at Patrick Henry I'm more liberal." Elisa has another year to go, but school has already changed in an important way: last semester, ten of her friends got engaged, including her roommate. "It was insane," Elisa said. She herself has courted twice, but courtship presumes that couples are considering marriage, and that, she told me, makes everything move too fast, before a relationship has gone anywhere at all. She would have serious discussions about children and insurance before the first kiss. Then, at some point, the boys realized "how much I really loved politics and wanted to be a part of it," and the prospect of her commitment to a career became a problem.

Elisa believes the Bible dictates that "there are different roles for men and women"; as a White House intern, she saw women with young children working "long, long hours," and she doesn't want that. Her mother, who had her first child at twenty-seven, tells her that she regrets having waited so long. But the expectation of most of the guys she knows at Patrick Henry—that wives should just "fade out," that she should instantly take on the identity of a wife and mother "and consider it a blessing"—is not something that she's comfortable with. "I just think there's more that God called me to do, and that's a hard thing to say around here," she told me.

Elisa Muench often has the feeling that nothing in her life is settled. When she tells her father or her old drama teacher that she wants to work at the White House, she does it tentatively, like someone testing out an identity. She knows that she is different from some of the other interns she has worked with—they had fake I.D.s and slept with their boyfriends—but she told me that the kids in school who annoy her the most are the ones locked into their Bibles, like one who, when they were studying Nietzsche, kept saying, "But God isn't dead!" She said, "What happens when they meet people who don't even read the Bible?" Once, she shook hands with George Bush and noticed that his hands were soft, not real rancher's hands, like her dad's. "You meet him and think, He's just a man. What's that expression? He puts on pants just like you."

At lunch one day, I talked with Farahn Morgan, the dancer, about the other students. Morgan had been homeschooled but also spent a lot of time in dance studios, and had a keener sense of social dynamics than many of her peers. The predominant view among Patrick Henry students is that "you choose your life path, not that things happen to you," she said. "A lot of people here, if they lose control—even for a second—they have a breakdown." Sometimes, instead of going to church, Morgan sits in her car alone and listens to sermons on the radio.

Patrick Henry is trying a complicated experiment: taking young evangelicals who have been raised in rarefied, controlled atmospheres and training them to become political leaders without somehow being corrupted by the secular world's demands—or, for that matter, moving to the middle. There are already young, ambitious politicians who talk openly about their relationship with Jesus and still get ahead. Whether someone like Matthew du Mée could actually climb the Republican Party hierarchy is far from clear, however. And, if he and his classmates do succeed, the real question may be how their party changes in response to them.

Some of the alumni are already demonstrating the risks of Farris's experiment. Having left Patrick Henry, they confront women at work who curse, colleagues who look at them skeptically when they talk about Jesus, or their own guilt when they fail to share the Word. They find that it's not easy to reconcile being a witness and working in Washington. The development office at Patrick Henry has asked graduates who work at the White House and in Congress if it can use their pictures in promotional materials, but almost all have declined. Even Elisa Muench says that when she's in Washington she won't advertise her connection.

But Matthew du Mée is not at that point yet; he has every reason to feel secure and happy. He and Christy Ross were married on June 4th, at a church near her home in Indiana, and he has a lead on a good job in Phoenix. He told me that he was glad to move on; his view of what's out there hasn't changed much since he was choosing a college, and imagined all the people who were waiting to hear his message. "We are all called to be lights out there in this world," he said, "and I'm looking forward to that." ♦

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LETTER FROM EUROPE

PAINTING THE TOWN

How Edi Rama reinvented Albanian politics.

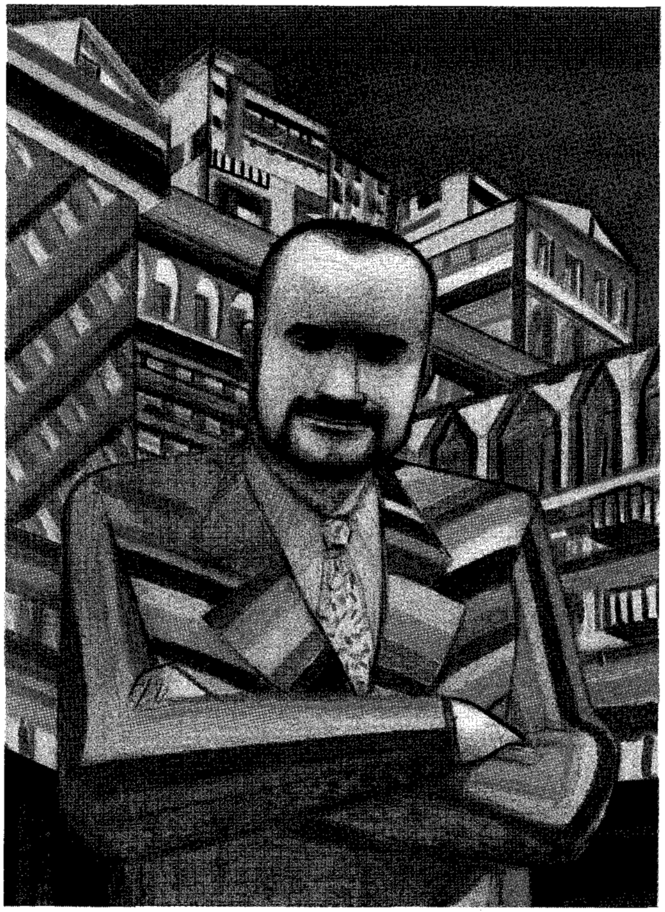
BY JANE KRAMER

Edi Rama is the mayor of Tirana, Albania, and it's safe to say that the Balkans have never produced a politician so beguiling. You see him everywhere: six feet six, three-day beard, baggy black pachuco pants, funky black vest, red shirt, red socks, and the kind of shapeless black frock coat that East German clergymen used to wear. You hear him everywhere: a gravelly basso exhorting the lazy, seducing the skeptics, booming his way through a hip-hop track about Tirana that half the city seems to own. He is inexhaustible. He spends his days repairing the body and soul of a shattered capital and his nights prowling its streets, seeing that the work got done, and that no one has been stealing street lights or dropping beer bottles or cigarette wrappers—that people are behaving like citizens. Rama is a Balkan original, and maybe the most original thing about him is that he isn't really a politician. He is an artist who, you might say, took Tirana for his canvas.

Rama has been in office for nearly five years (he was elected in 2000, at the age of thirty-six, and reëlected three years later), and the first thing he did as mayor was to order paint. He blasted the façades of Tirana's gray Stalinist apartment blocks with color—riotous, Caribbean color—turning buildings into patchworks of blues, greens, oranges, purples, yellows, and reds, and the city itself into something close to a modern-masters sampler. (*Art in America* put a Tirana façade on its December cover; it looked like an abstract painting.) It was an extravagant gesture, but Rama thinks in extravagant gestures. "The city was without organs," he says, meaning that it was a dump, and that nothing in it functioned. ("Kandahar" is how he usually describes it.) "I thought, My colors will have to replace those organs. It was an *intervention*."

The interventions continued. Within a few years, Rama had managed to clear the choked, riverine city center of two thousand illegal kiosks and bars and cafés and shops and whorehouses and sleeping barracks and traffickers' storeroom "motels"—the detritus of a decade of post-Communist freedom frenzy on city property. He carted away a hundred and twenty-three thousand tons of concrete and ninety thousand tons of garbage. He dredged Tirana's Lana River, seeded thirty-six acres of public parks, relaid old boulevards, and planted four thousand trees. He lit the city—literally, since only seventy-eight street lights worked when he took it over. He cajoled the money for all this transformation out of the World Bank and the European Union and the United Nations Development Program and George Soros and the score of foundations and aid agencies and N.G.O.s that had set up shop in Albania in the early nineties. And he cajoled the work out of local contractors: anybody who wanted to build anything in the capital had to "contribute." People enjoy Tirana now. They stroll and shop on the shady streets of what used to be their Politburo's version of a gated neighborhood. They read the paper and drink espresso under the white umbrellas of cheerful, sprawling cafés. There is nothing remotely like Tirana in the rest of Albania. Most of its cities are still Kandahar. And its politicians, as often as not, are the clan bosses who control the contraband.

"People can say that my color is only makeup," Rama told me, as we walked through town one mild February night, stopping on an old stone Ottoman footbridge he had just restored. "But suppose all makeup disappeared. Suppose all women had no makeup, no pretty dresses, no pretty hair." It is Rama's belief that Albanians are somewhat aesthetically challenged—and his mission is to meet that challenge. "These are not Parisians," he said. "They can be calmed by beauty."



Rama's first move as mayor was to blast Tirana with color.

LORENZO MATTOTTI

Not long ago, Edi Rama was living a happy, hardscrabble artist's life in the City of Light. He was a good painter, not a great one, and the only real difference between him and hundreds of other young painters making their *vie de bohème* in Paris then was that Rama was an *Albanian* painter—a breed not much seen in the West, or, for that matter, in most of the East, in the half century since a Communist Party Secretary named Enver Hoxha put Albania in the deep freeze of Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy and shut the door. Rama had come to Paris in 1995 on a two-year fellowship to the Cité Internationale des Arts, and stayed. He didn't have much, but it was pretty much all he wanted: a cheap apartment on the Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Antoine; a friendly neighborhood café; a great-looking German girlfriend; an old laptop; and his paints. He had had some shows, his paintings were selling, and he was feasting on Western art. He had fallen in love with Picasso on a trip to the Kunsthalle Bremen ("I saw my first Picasso; I thought, I'll die") and then with Mark Rothko and Francis Bacon and Max Ernst. Now he was in love with the Louvre and its Paolo Uccellos, and was working day and night on a series of new paintings. "Edi was a free spirit," his friend and occasional Paris roommate, the Albanian video artist Anri Sala, says. "He was never interested in things, only in things that brought him closer to his vision." He certainly wasn't interested in trading Paris for Albania.

People were leaving Albania then (nearly a million, by the end of the nineties), not returning. The country was in chaos. Depending on whom you asked, it was "recovering from fifty years of Communism" or "making an irrepressible transition to democracy" or "being its Balkan self," which, for practical purposes, meant that it was held hostage to a collection of traffickers, mobsters, hustlers, money launderers, and politicians who were bent or brutal (or both). Albania's last Communist Prime Minister, a born-again Socialist Party leader named Fatos Nano, had been thrown in prison on unsubstantiated (if unsurprising) charges involving eight million dollars that had gone missing from an emergency food-aid deal with Italy a few years earlier. Albania's President, an old Politburo doctor and new Democratic Party leader named Sali Berisha, was extolling the purity of Albanian money while two-thirds of the people—united, briefly, in a mass hysteria they took for capitalism—sank their pensions and their life savings into pyramid schemes that left the country bankrupt, its arsenals looted, and close to civil war.

The choice between Albania's new "Socialists" and its new "Democrats" (two misnomers, used mainly because they sounded Western) amounted to

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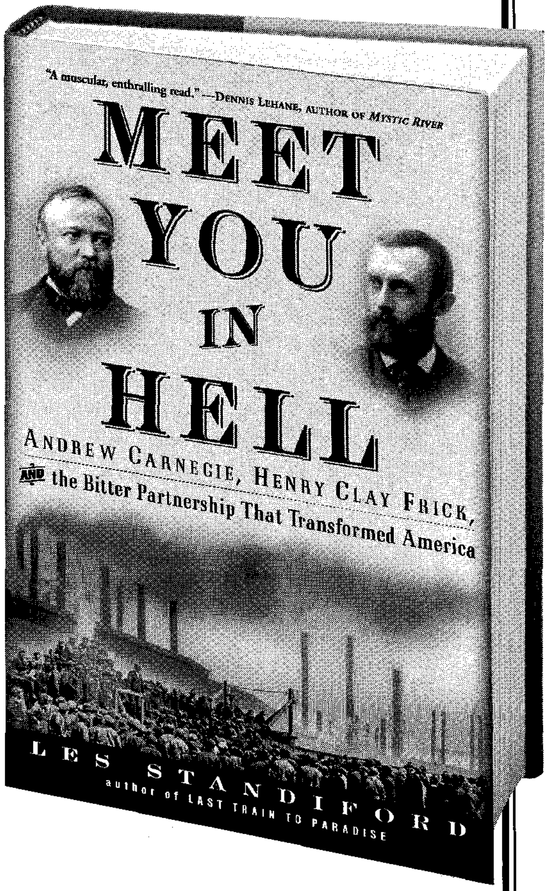
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"It's James Earl Jones from Verizon again—he wants to know if we still respect him as an actor."

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what one Albanian called the poison or the axe, and it was not a choice anyone should have had to make. Rama's own politics then were, by his description, "Paris left and Tirana troublemaker radical." He had put in time as a leader of Albania's young democracy movement in the early nineties, and had sat on Soros's local Open Society board with a group of like-minded intellectuals determined to open their country to the West and escape what the anthropologist Mariella Pandolfi calls the Balkan conundrum of "permanent transition." He had left a reputation, and a following, behind him—a reputation he maintained in Paris by writing columns for a Tirana paper on the subject of what was wrong with Albania. ("My bottles in the sea," he calls his dispatches.) Safe in Paris, he was making the satraps tremble. In the winter of 1997, when he was home visiting his parents, two thugs rumored to be Berisha hitmen intercepted him on a dark road, beat him senseless with lead pipes, and left him for dead—an event he commemorated, in what has come to be known as "the Edi Rama style," by staggering to a photographer's house, on his way to the hospital, and posing for pictures of his cracked skull and his smashed, swollen, bloody face. "Thirteen blows," he told his friends when the doctors removed his feeding and breathing tubes. (Berisha denies having ordered the attack.)

A year later, Rama flew home for his father's funeral. He told his girlfriend, "I'm back in four days." By the next morning, Fatos Nano—fresh from jail, Prime Minister again, and looking for a clean face to decorate an otherwise murky cabinet—had named him Minister of Culture. (His first "intervention" as a minister was to underwrite a movie theatre for Tirana, telling his colleagues that in terms of public morale and safety "a dark theatre with a good movie is more effective than an unlit street with a thousand police.") In two more years, he was Tirana's mayor. This spring, he was travelling to meetings every Sunday, and people said he was weighing the chances of becoming Prime Minister himself—something that most Albanians would welcome. Rama said no, that he had made a "moral contract" with Tirana, and that he "would not tear up this contract, even if they offered to make me king, let alone Prime Minister." (Elections are in two weeks, and he is campaigning for the Socialists.) But the pols were already so alarmed at even the thought of an Edi Rama government that they had been doing all they could to derail him. Months before Tirana's last mayoral election, Berisha had produced a dossier of Rama's "crimes"—trafficking, laundering, mob connections, drug connections, terrorist connections, everything bad he could think of—and demanded a parliamentary investigation. Rama's response was to wrap City Hall in sheets, like a Christo, with the accusations printed across them in big red letters. He called it "Happy April 1st from the Doctor."

"Going from art to politics—I wouldn't in any normal situation have done this," Rama told me. "It's impossible, it's Kafka, it's like changing sex. But I wanted to leave my name in the history of this city, this country. On the day of his funeral, my father gave me his most important lesson. I saw the crowds"—his father, Kristaq, had been Albania's favorite sculptor, an inventive master of what could be called socialist-realist Baroque—"and I saw the respect they paid him. I saw that nothing is as valuable as leaving a good history behind you. I went to his grave and made a promise."

Tirana was a small city of two hundred and fifty thousand people until the Communist regime unravelled and hundreds of thousands of northern clansmen, from near the Kosovo border, began to descend to its outskirts. Fifteen years later, more than seven hundred thousand people live in and around the city, but the original Tirana is still small, and the original families are still there. Edi Rama comes from one of those families. The Ramas were a Balkan mix, but "southern" in spirit—southern, in Albania, being a code for urban and (at least in origin) Christian, closer in culture and temperament to Greece, to the south, and Italy, just across the Adriatic, than to anyone in the largely Muslim north, much of it as primitive as it was when Lord Byron visited Ali Pasha. They were also part of that cautious, curious East European élite that had survived, shabbily but comfortably, during the Communist years by joining the Party and doing whatever complaining they did in private. They had considerable privilege: a roomy apartment; a studio for Kristaq; the use of their old family villa, south of Vlora, where the Adriatic meets the Ionian Sea. They were educated and,

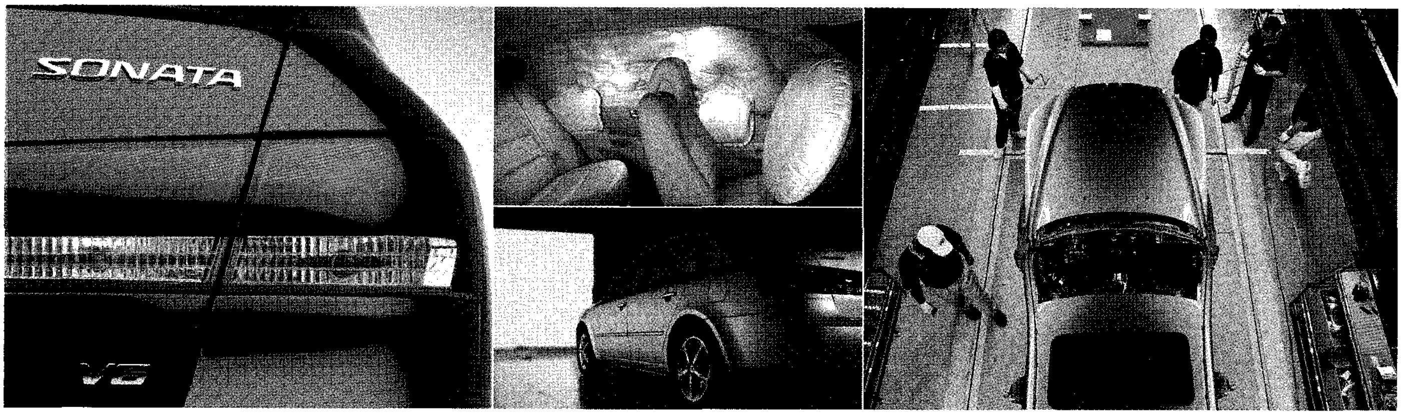
A SHIFT in the CENTER OF GRAVITY

RAND ENTRANCES ARE TYPICAL FARE—even expected—at the Detroit auto show, where each January the world's carmakers stage elaborate unveilings of their upcoming models for thousands of international journalists. Still, the sight of a 2006 Hyundai Sonata descending onto the stage from the ceiling of Cobo Center was an unusually dramatic introduction for a company whose products have been associated more closely with solid practicality and quality than with attention-grabbing fanfare.

The Sonata's "reveal," as it known in the industry, is a good indicator of how much has changed. Barely two decades after the Hyundai Motor Company first began selling its cars in the United States—starting with a no-frills subcompact called the Excel—the company has been transformed from a minor nameplate into a can't-ignore competitor that ranks ninth in sales volume among the world's automakers. Adding a bit of drama and excitement to the introduction of its newest model seems altogether fitting.

Even so, the unwrapping of the new Sonata was not a full telling of the Hyundai story, but something akin to the sighting of an iceberg: a lot more is going on below the surface than is apparent at first glance. The Sonata is not only an all-new model, but it is manufactured in a billion-dollar

PHOTOS: © HYUNDAI MOTOR AMERICA



plant in Montgomery, Alabama, that just opened this spring. Hyundai's model range has expanded from its modest beginning with a single offering of budget-conscious transportation to now include a sports coupe, several family sedans and sport utility vehicles, and soon, a plush luxury model called Azera. In all, Hyundai's expansion plan calls for seven new models to be introduced over two years.

The remarkable growth of Hyundai—it sold more than 418,000 cars in the United States in 2004—wouldn't be on such solid footing in today's highly competitive market were it not for the company's large following of satisfied customers.

Hyundais are lauded by accolades that come from many quarters. A leading consumer magazine reported that the 2004 Sonata was the most reliable car of all, based on a wide-ranging survey of its readers. Hyundai's best-seller, the Elantra sedan, topped the "Customer Delight Index" rankings for small cars as measured by Strategic Vision, a prominent market research firm. Five Hyundai models—Accent, Elantra, Santa Fe, Sonata, and Tiburon—were honored as "Best Bet" recipients in "The Car Book 2005," a consumer guide published in cooperation with the Center for Auto Safety. In addition, the Hyundai Santa Fe won the AutoPacific 2004 Vehicle Satisfaction Award in the Standard Mid-Size Sport Utility category, the third such win for the Santa Fe, which topped its category in this California-based automotive marketing and consulting firm's earlier 2001 and 2002 awards as well. Hyundai also ranks fourth in the industry when it comes to customer retention.

> "THE COMPANY has been transformed from a minor nameplate into a *CAN'T-IGNORE COMPETITOR* that ranks ninth in sales volume among the world's automakers."

These results, impressive on their own, are even more meaningful when considered in an industry-wide context: the Hyundai brand outranked European automakers and over all, ranked second—tied with Honda and behind only one other well-known Japanese nameplate, according to a leading survey of new car owners. The clear message, says John Krafcik, vice-president of Product Development and Strategic Planning, is that Hyundai is now being recognized as "a tier-one producer of automotive quality."

According to Krafcik, the company's obsessive focus on quality—even making design improvements after a new model has started production—is responsible for its ranking. "No other carmaker has made such a rapid ascent," he says. "It's because we are willing to re-engineer as required. We'll make whatever changes are necessary to secure the customer's trust."

The recognition of world-class quality is, no doubt, a factor in Hyundai starting 2005 with a string of all-time sales records in the United States. Of course, the bold policy of backing its cars with a ten-year engine and power-train warranty helps. The company calls it "America's Best Warranty"—a confident statement if ever there was one—which has persuaded shoppers who were reluctant to invest their earnings in a vehicle whose reputation they knew little about.

Equally high in the priorities of new-car shoppers is safety, and the company's commitment to leadership in this area is made clear in a quick review of the 2006 Sonata's list of standard equipment: dual front air bags, side-impact air bags, and side-curtain air bags. It's also the only mid-size car that includes leading-edge accident-prevention systems like electronic stability control (ESC). Not only is the feature standard in the Sonata and the Tucson, but most competitors don't offer it as optional equipment, including the Honda Accord.

Across the board, Hyundais are factory-equipped with class-leading levels of standard safety equipment. Hyundai is the first non-luxury automaker to offer standard, seat-mounted, side-impact air bag protection in all of its models. And beginning with Tucson and every new vehicle launched after it, Hyundai will enhance side-impact protection by adding standard, side-curtain air bags safeguarding all outboard occupants.

The protection afforded by such safety devices is well established in studies by the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, says Krafcik. The ESC system has been shown to reduce fatalities in single-vehicle accidents by thirty per cent for passenger cars and sixty-three per cent for SUVs. Similarly, the combination of side air bags and side-curtain air bags yields a forty-five per cent reduction in side-impact fatalities, according to the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety.

Hyundai models also perform well in crash tests conducted in the government's New Car Assessment Program, or NCAP. The top ranking of five stars was earned by the XG350 sedan, and all of the current passenger cars in Hyundai's line hold four- or five-star ratings.

The Sonata, and three other Hyundai models, will be factory-equipped with an XM satellite radio system beginning in the fall of 2006, another industry first. While this feature would seem typical to a Mercedes-Benz buyer, it is something of a breakthrough for a family sedan that starts at less than $20,000. (All other Hyundai models will have the feature in the 2007 calendar year.)

Perhaps the most certain indicator of Hyundai's intentions can be seen on the 1,744-acre Alabama site, where the new two-million square-foot plant is located. This is not a mere assembly location for parts imported from the Korean headquarters: engine blocks are cast and machined here, and body panels are stamped on gargantuan 5,400-ton presses.

When fully operational, some 2,000 workers will be employed at the plant, which is located on the Interstate 65 corridor in an area of the Southeast where a number of automakers, including BMW and Mercedes-Benz, and major parts suppliers, have facilities. The plant's capacity is 300,000 vehicles a year; the 2007 Santa Fe will be built in Alabama alongside the Sonata, beginning next year. At that point, half of the Hyundais sold in the United States will be made in the United States, according to Krafcik.

The Next Generation of Hyundai

In May, Hyundai's new $1.1 billion assembly plant opened in Montgomery, Alabama, to a throng of 4,000, marking the début of the company's first U.S. manufacturing facility. As Alabama Governor Bob Riley noted, "It also makes the state the third largest automobile producer in the country."

In addition to the nearly two-thousand employees in Montgomery, sixty-four parts suppliers located throughout North America are expected to create 5,500 more jobs to support the plant's operation. Hyundai Chairman Mong-Koo Chung commented that the new facility "reaffirms Hyundai's commitment toward investing in the U.S. economy, as well as a commitment toward U.S. consumers."

Also in attendance, former President George H.W. Bush remarked, "This opening is just the latest manifestation of the close ties between two great nations that has matured into a vibrant economic relationship."

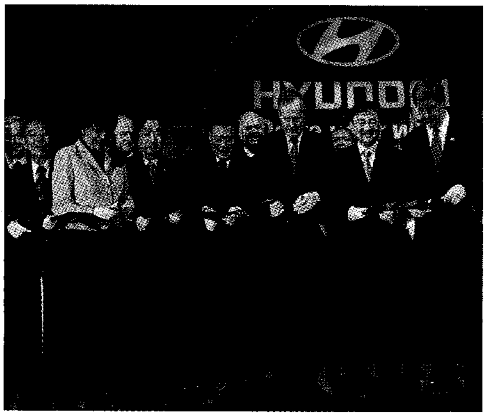
The event marked the official start of production with the 2006 Sonata sedan, which Bob Cosmai, president of Hyundai Motor America, called "the most important launch for us in our history." At full capacity, Hyundai is expected to produce 300,000 cars a year here, where there are 7,000 feet of state-of-the-art conveyors, welding, paint, and stamping shops with more than 250 robots, an engine assembly plant, and a 2.3-mile test track.

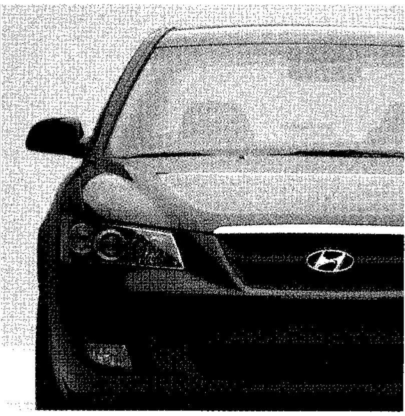
Hyundai is not only building its vehicles in the States, it also designs and develops them here. An expansion of its technical center, opening this summer near Ann Arbor, Michigan, places Hyundai in the hotbed of auto research and development. Earlier this year, a new proving grounds in California City, a Mojave Desert town north of Los Angeles, came on line, enabling Hyundai to test cars under the conditions that American owners will experience. A new U.S. design center, in Irvine, California, helps the company to stay current with trends and customer preferences in the American market.

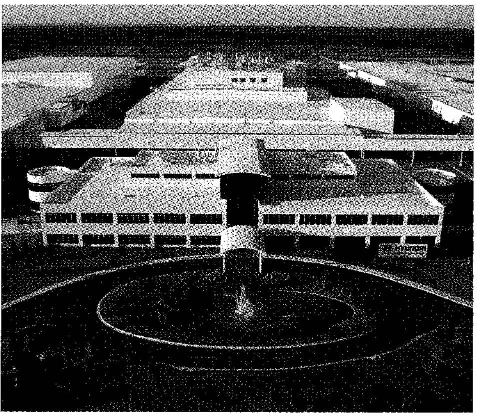
The measure of Hyundai's ambitious intentions to earn its way into the top rank of global automakers was fully evident at the New York auto show this spring, where new models at both ends of the price scale were introduced. The entry-level Accent and a new flagship, the Azera, both of which go on sale in the fall, are unambiguous statements of a company that intends to grow with customers, while providing a pathway for young newcomers to join the ownership experience. The Accent advances Hyundai's formula of continually upgrading the product, offering more features as standard equipment. Some of the perks are attractive for their entertainment value—XM satellite radio, for example—while others are safety advantages.

The top-line Azera goes further, appealing to the heart as well as the head. Larger and more powerful than today's XG350 and with more interior room than the Mercedes S-Class and BMW 745, the Azera's design displays a maturity and refinement that communicates in no uncertain terms Hyundai's capability to compete with the best on every level.

Can Hyundai continue its blazing pace of accomplishments? President Bob Cosmai believes it can, and offers his explanation: "It's because things here move at what we call 'Hyundai speed,'" he says. "We launched our new plant in China in 2003, and now the Hyundai Elantra is China's best-seller."







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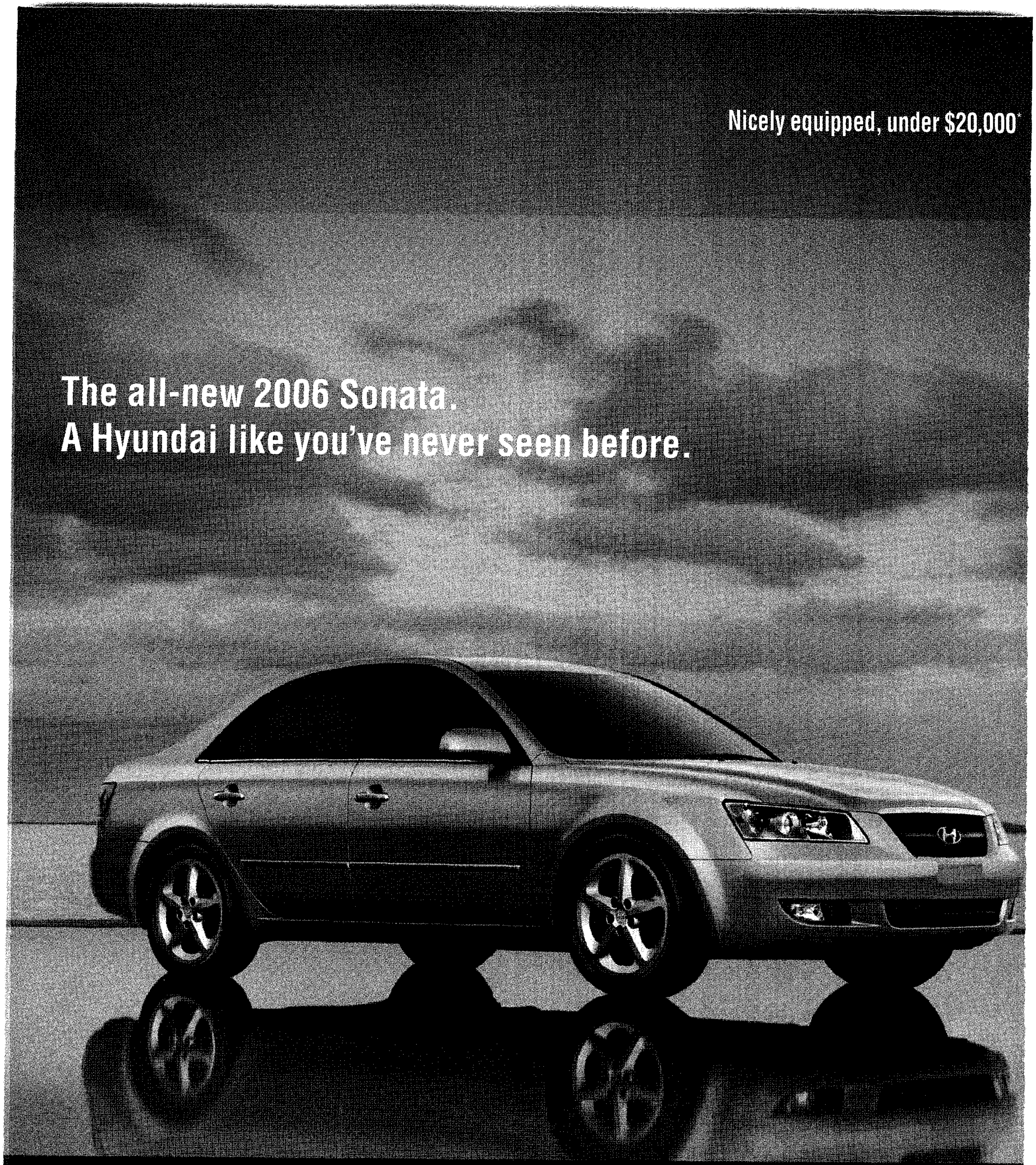

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Electronic Stability Control will not compensate for careless driving techniques and is not a substitute for safe driving practices. Safety belts should always be worn. *LX model shown, around $25,300. **Hyundai Advantage. †See dealer for LIMITED WARRANTY details. *MSRP excl. $600 freight, taxes, title, license, and options. Dealer price may vary. Hyundai and Hyundai model names are registered trademarks of Hyundai Motor America. All rights reserved. ©2005 Hyundai Motor America.

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to an extent, travelled. Rama's father had studied art in Leningrad. His mother, Aneta, who was one of the country's first women dentists, had trained in Lodz. His younger brother, Olsi, who, like Edi, studied at home, now lives with his own family in a Detroit suburb and is part of a research team at the Karmanos Cancer Institute.

Rama was born during Albania's "Mao years," after the country broke with Russia and attached itself to China. And it may be a measure of how bleak and isolated life in Albania was then that people remembered the Russians with something close to nostalgia. For Rama, it was a drama played out at home: "My father was a Communist. For him, Communism meant studying art in Russia, it meant Mayakovsky and the spirit of that moment—it was like being completely drug-addicted. He came slowly down, making a balance between disillusion and fear. He was decent, quiet, he never had many words, but he was a hostage of the need to keep his family safe. He became more and more silent. In our family, it was always possible to argue. But the feeling was: 'What for?' "

When Rama talks about the family, he prefers to start with his father's mother, who arrived in Tirana from Durres after the Second World War. His grandmother was a Catholic (most Albanian Christians are Orthodox), and he says that, for him, she was a glimpse into a forbidden world. He remembers her during the Mao years, when religion was a constitutional offense, whispering her rosary at night in the nursery, where he and Olsi slept. "After lights-out, I would hear that low voice, making her prayers. She was my night music." He says that she planted the seeds of "an alternative way of thinking in me, an alternative to what Communist ideology meant by 'love' and 'values.' " When he was a baby, she brought a priest into the apartment and had him baptized secretly; she gave him "shelter against everything that was taught out loud."

At eighteen, Rama entered the Albanian Academy of Arts—a place where "painting stopped at Courbet." But by then he was lost in another forbidden world, a world he had discovered, as a boy, in clandestine chance encounters—a book or a journal here, a picture there, a smuggled tape, an instrument. He remembers hearing a saxophone for the first time. Saxophones were banned in Albania, which may be why the day a school friend whispered, "Want to see a saxophone?" is as memorable to him as the day he saw his first nude drawings. He says that the sound of that saxophone—a few notes, played in his friend's attic, with lookouts posted on the stairs—was "like a strange amplification of the miraculous," and started him wondering "why all these beautiful things were bad." Beautiful things were hard to find in Albania then. Rama took to visiting one of his father's old art professors who had studied in Florence in the thirties and was said to own two volumes of Impressionist prints. ("They were like pearls, like nectar," he says.) He started hanging around the National Library, staying late to help the maids clean; his pay was five minutes alone with a banned book of Georges Braque's paintings. "A spiritual sandwich," he calls it.

No one knows how Rama survived Communist Albania. His friends claim it was because he was tall—"Nobody in Albania is that tall," one of them told me—and was kept safe for the greater glory of the national basketball team, which he joined for a while in the late eighties, perhaps the only player in its history who could dunk. His brother says he survived on eloquence, intensity, and a gift for bullshit. He managed to graduate from the Arts Academy, in 1986, and even to be asked to stay on as an assistant professor. But he was also known for having the two most dangerous enthusiasms in Albania—God and art—and he was fast becoming a public figure. He started lecturing on Bauhaus principles. He embraced Expressionism. In fact, he introduced Albania to Expressionism, taking a Party commission for a forty-foot mural at a museum built to commemorate the draining of swampland for collective farms, and, with a painter named Vladimir Myrtezai, turning out "a work of Expressionism hiding in the theme of darkness" (Rama's words). "It created a lot of noise and disappointment" in the Party, he likes to say.

Rama celebrated the fall of the Berlin Wall by opening an arts conference with smuggled tapes of Joe Cocker and Prince. He was premature. Albania's Communists clung to power for two more years, and during those years Rama and his friends began to organize big open meetings, which they called Reflections, in a darkened Arts Academy auditorium where "everyone was equal." They invited old political prisoners—"the buried-alive people"—to the Academy to tell their stories. They went to political rallies where ex-Communists like Berisha, trying to invent new parties, talked endlessly about democracy but never about the past, never about the fact that Enver Hoxha had led Albania astray. According to Rama, Berisha accused them of "opening the sewers of our society," and when that happened he got on the phone to Voice of America and said, "Listen, we want to make a declaration. We are not flinging mud at the memory of Enver Hoxha. We are just starting to wash off the mud he flung on us."

Rama says, "For me, it was as if Hoxha died at that moment. I thought, I'm a free man. I want the world." He was on his way out of a brief and unhappy marriage. (He has a son, Greg, who is nearly fifteen.) He took the money he had just made from a show in Corfu, his first outside Albania, and started travelling—to France, Germany, England, Brazil, wherever he got a grant or an invitation or a cheap ticket. And he started thinking about the cities he saw and what made them work and what made them interesting. "Rome, for instance. I thought, This is the end of history, it's where things ended, where the sun went to bed. Paris—well, there was the beautiful, transparent life of the Paris miracle, but it's there for you, nothing comes out of it. The most impressive place was London. I felt the freedom, the energy of London." He didn't know why Albania couldn't produce a great city.

"When I think about governance—about how easy it is—it makes me sick," Rama announced one night over dinner at his favorite seafood restaurant, about a half hour out from Tirana. The Albanian soccer team was eating at

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the next table. Some of the players had just trooped over to shake hands with Rama, and one had mentioned that the Prime Minister was offering a four-hundred-thousand-dollar bonus if they beat Ukraine in a World Cup qualifying match scheduled for the next night. (They didn't.) Rama was uneasy about the offer. He talked for a while about how well most young Albanians could do if they were simply left alone. Albania, with a population that is seventy per cent Muslim, remains, at least for now, a secular country, free from the kind of violence that ravaged Kosovo, next door. "We have no religious problem, no ethnic problem, only ourselves," Rama said, finally. "And it would be so easy to be ourselves." The problem was how.

A few days earlier, Rama had downloaded an Internet test that was going to read his "political compass." It had a horizontal axis from "left" to "right" and a vertical axis from "libertarian" to "authoritarian," and Rama had made his dot about halfway down the "left libertarian" quadrant, just to the right of Nelson Mandela and a bit more authoritarian than the Dalai Lama. He was satisfied, but he wasn't sure. He said that the experience of running Tirana had convinced him that there was "nothing left or right in the way I deal with the world," that the real divisions in Albania had less to do with politics than with honest and corrupt, peaceful and violent, and, especially, with "the hard-working people and the people who don't respect work." Right now, this is his only politics. "If I lived in Germany or France or England, no doubt I'd be totally with the left wing," he told me. "But there is a huge difference in the situation there. At the end of the day, the ideology *we* need to embrace is the ideology of work. Right and left are only a question of how you distribute. For us, the key is to *have* something to distribute."

Rama works all the time. His friend Dashi Peza—who put in a few years with him at City Hall and left, exhausted, to go into the hotel business—told me, "When I met Edi, we were boys, but he was more disciplined and devoted than a priest. I said, 'Edi, relax, try some sin!' " Edi has tried. He learned to smoke in Paris. He developed a taste for wine. But, once he was mayor, he stopped, and now even a big meal can make him feel guilty. He goes on crash diets, some of them mystifying ("Days 12-13: white cheese, French fries, boiled vegetables") but, he claims, punishing enough to make him feel "less spiritually heavy." Even his old girlfriends—he introduced one of them to his aunt as "my fourth victim"—say that they had no chance against his passion for Albania. Today, he lives with his son and with his partner of five years, a preternaturally patient young television hostess and producer named Rudina Magjistari, who, he says, understands that passion. Magjistari says, "Well, to stay with Edi, you must understand him, you have to accept him as he is. Obsessive. Preoccupied. At first it was a bit strange." Rama comes home at night and collapses on the couch, his head in Magjistari's lap, never speaking, reading the Italian papers, surfing the local news, and text-messaging half the people he knows to see what they think of the news or, more accurately, the news about him, and what he should do about it. Text messaging is his addiction: he thinks of something, and he starts tapping. "Am I pissing you off?" he asks cheerfully whenever a friend complains. "Doing nothing makes me nervous."

This year, Rama has been giving himself a crash course in economics. It's a fairly haphazard exercise, inasmuch as most of the reading list, the advice, and, often, the books themselves have been supplied by visitors from abroad. Three years ago, the United Nations honored Rama for his work in Tirana. And last year, up against mayors from places like Athens, Rome, and Mexico City, he was chosen World Mayor 2004. (A city-watch group based in London took the poll.) Now everybody who comes to Albania wants to meet Edi Rama, and they bring books. "I'm always with a book, I'm reading about economy all the time," Rama says. Todd Buchholz, Thomas Sowell, Hernando de Soto's "The Other Path" and "The Mystery of Capital." Hardly a left-wing list, but Rama, somewhat to his surprise, has become not only a law-and-order politician but an eager disciple of a group of unconventionally conservative economists—especially De Soto, whose books have convinced him that "the poor are not the problem but the solution to the problem." De Soto comes from Peru, and it was his fairly successful theory that you could salvage the Peruvian economy by folding the poor into the propertied classes—turning squatters into owners, formalizing their titles to create a property-tax base that would open credit sources for them and turn dead capital into working capital.

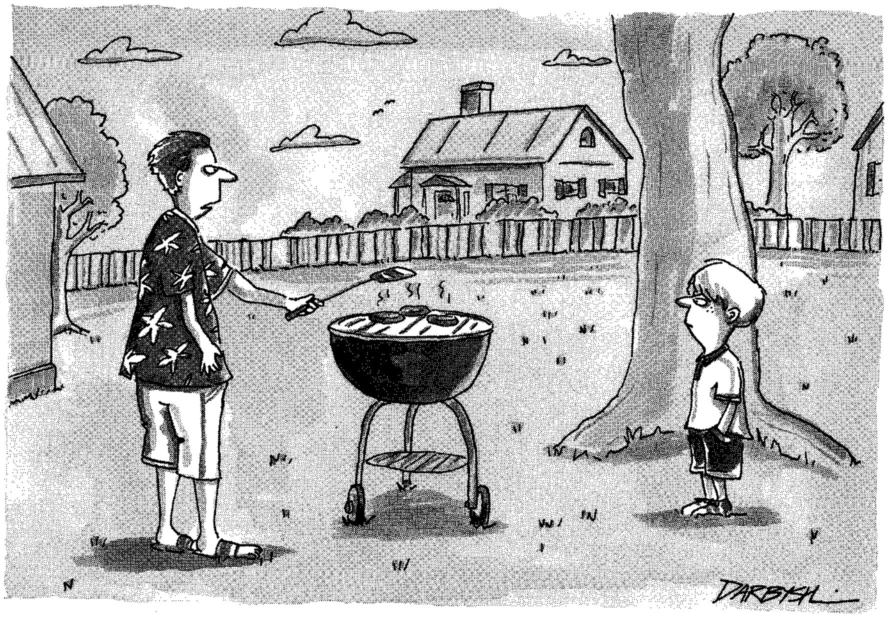
This is Rama's prescription for Tirana. He says that it fits Albania's historical givens, the most important being that people who have lived through Communism, where everything belonged to the state, want to take back possession of their own lives—their land, their businesses, their homes. Some Tirana intellectuals call this a fetish of private property, but Rama points out that those intellectuals are not running a city with more than a quarter of a million people building illegally on its periphery. He has been constructing roads and schools and playgrounds, and laying power cables and water mains, in those outlying zones. It is part of his plan to engage the northerners living there—a snarly collection of mountaineers who tend to look more like extras from a Gypsy movie than like eager students of the mortgage system—in what he calls "turning piles of bricks into legal property."

It's not evident that the politicians will even let him try. Tirana's squatters were first courted by Berisha, who, according to Rama, told them they didn't have to buy their land, or pay for anything, or even register as residents, as long as they voted for him. Then they were courted by Nano, who had a keen interest in complicating Rama's work—which is to say in doing whatever he could to keep Rama from succeeding him. Rama has been running out of things to offer. For one thing, the N.G.O.s are leaving, and taking their money with them. For another, Albania remains a thoroughly centralized country. The state decides how many policemen Tirana gets to patrol its streets and enforce its property-tax laws (a hundred) and how much water it deserves (twelve hours' worth, on a good day) and whether its electricity arrives (off and on) and its schools and hospitals function (often, they don't).

Tirana's budget is small—about sixty-seven million dollars last year. (Baltimore, with roughly the same population, has a budget of more than two billion.) Rama raised thirty-seven million of that himself, from city licenses and service taxes. But the subsidies he used to receive from the state have dropped by half since he first took office, and he figures that this year, once he covers his costs—salaries, social services, maintenance—he will be left with only twenty-six million for his Tirana projects. His staff works mainly for love. His own salary is fifteen hundred and eighty-two dollars a month, and he rents his apartment. He and Magjistari used to get by living in two small rooms and eating at his mother's, but four years ago a sniper fired through the kitchen window, missing Magjistari by a few feet. Eventually, they moved to a four-room walkup at the back of a closed courtyard, with a guard stationed at the gate and no window access from the street. Rama's only perks are his Italian papers and his security detail. One Saturday when we drove to Vlora, a car with a couple of bodyguards joined us. They got out whenever we did. He never explained why.

Tirana's City Hall sits in the middle of town, at one end of a group of Italianate government buildings that flank the entrance to an empty piazza called Skanderbeg Square—an enormous space that once housed most of the city's sprawling Ottoman bazaar. The bazaar was nearly as old as Tirana. It managed, at least in part, to survive its occupiers of the past century—the Hapsburgs, the northern chieftain King Zog, the Italians, the Germans—but in 1959 the Communists razed it. They put up the obligatory Palace of Culture you found in most Communist capitals, and, eventually, a gloomy National Historical Museum, and then they stopped. The big roads into the city still converge on Skanderbeg Square, but there are no trees, no benches, no children playing, nothing but a flat, paved space that leaves you feeling vulnerable and exposed, which is just how Hoxha wanted you to feel in the presence of state power. "Tirana's empty heart," Rama calls it.

Rama restored the government buildings when he was Minister of Culture, along with an eighteenth-century mosque—the Mosque of Ethem Bey—next to City Hall, and a rare Ottoman clock tower behind it. His mission now is to rebuild the city center, and to bring Skanderbeg Square to life by pointing the life of the center toward it. He has invited some of Europe's best architects to submit plans and to sit on juries, and has made the competition "transparent," opening the process to the public and asking his judges to explain their choices—something unheard of in Albania and, in fact, in most of Europe. More to the point, he is trying to civilize the speculators and developers who now own most of central Tirana's real estate, working openly with them, claiming whatever land he needs from them for public space—for a municipal pool, say, or a concert hall—and demanding that they use the rest according to very specific



"Don't think of me as your stepdad—think of me as the guy having sex with your mom."

guidelines. What they get, in return, is a measure of status, a chance to look civic-minded and respectable, and maybe even to become respectable.

Right now, according to most estimates, at least a quarter of the Albanian economy is "informal," which is to say, fuelled by crime and by improvised black markets. Construction is the country's biggest legal industry and, as everywhere, the conduit of choice for most of the illegal ones—the time-honored way for getting dirty money into a safe Swiss bank. (Al Qaeda allegedly bought into Albania's construction racket in the nineties, filtering Saudi money through an Egyptian investment group and into a stake in two exceptionally ugly black Tirana office buildings.)

Rama is a realist—"a realist who dreams," he says—and he knows that his success with Tirana may depend on some of its least reputable people. Tirana's developers and contractors have astonishing power. They control the press; there are seventeen dailies in the country, and they own all but a few of them. They own most of its seventy television stations, too. And they make their own political choices. One of Rama's most ardent supporters is a contractor and businessman named Koca Kokedhima, who owns, among other things, *Shekulli*, the country's biggest and best newspaper. (Rama, who likes him, describes him as thinking like a fox and looking like an "old-time Russian gangster.") "Edi is a simple person, like me, a concrete person, a person who wants to build things" is how Kokedhima explains their friendship. He is proud of it, perhaps because Rama may be the first politician in his experience who doesn't expect kickbacks: "I'm not entering inside his head. I'm not opening his heart. But he has been my best relationship in all these years."

Rama makes no excuses for his belief that, if he wants to rebuild Tirana, he needs private investment in public projects—which means some sort of working partnership with the developers. He thinks he can control them. Some people are worried that the developers will end up controlling him. They say that, for all his new economic theories, Rama is an innocent among sharks. "It's like when Edi would fall in love with a woman," Dashi Peza told me. "He'd get on the phone with you for hours, explaining how intelligent she was, how passionate about people—how she was so great. Now he's in love with politics, and so everyone is great." But most of his friends think he's shrewd. Ardian Klosi, a writer and translator who organized the Reflections with him, says, "Edi knows it's not to his credit to deal with some of those businessmen, but he does it to build his roads, his city. He can speak their language when he has to. He's a real politician." One old friend has broken with him completely. Fatos Lubonja, a writer (and former political prisoner) of uncommon talent and huge resentments, rails at him on television shows, in newspaper columns, to just about anybody who will listen. "Rama, for the moment, is the focus of all the money interests in Tirana," he told me. "Why doesn't he construct through the banks, like people in Europe did?" Once, he said, "Rama's biggest illusion is that he can work his way out of the system. Here, for honest people, it's impossible to survive."

In fact, it may not matter what anyone thinks about Rama. He is thin-skinned but headstrong. "Edi is a loner, a solitary fighter, not a team player," Genc Ruli, an economist who is running for parliament on Berisha's ticket, says. "He's like the Balkans, which has lords, not leaders." Mustafa Nano, the political columnist for *Shekulli*, puts it this way: "I have a fear that Edi's democratic formation is a little deficient." Even his friends admit that Rama runs the city by a kind of papal seduction. (His speeches could melt a stone.) But they say that he has no choice—that it is pointless to open more of "the Tirana discussion" to Tirana until what Rama calls "habits of citizenship" are in place and laws respected. Rama himself says, "This business of my always acting alone is a big myth! Sure, I go strongly for things. I have a strong personality. You know me, I'm always talking and talking, arguing and arguing. But in the end there has to be a decision."

The master plan for Tirana—the winning design came from the French firm Architecture-Studio—calls for ten two-hundred-and-eighty-foot office and apartment buildings (skyscrapers, by local standards) to demarcate and punctuate two boulevards that run parallel to the park he plans for Skanderbeg Square. The jury liked the plan for its drama. The urbanists liked it for its density. The developers liked it for the shopping spaces reserved for the towers' lower floors. But a lot of people claimed that it wouldn't be "European" or that it would block their views of the mosque and the clock tower and out to Mt. Dajte, or that it would destroy Tirana's "historic center"—though that center is, of course, long gone. After the vote, Rama told everybody what he told me: "Popes put up obelisks. These towers will be our obelisks. They are *acupunctural!*"

The jury for the first tower met in January of this year, and in February I sat in on the meeting where a new jury of architects chose the second one—a beauti-

CHAIRING MARY

Heavy, helpless, carefully manhandled
Upstairs every night in a wooden chair
She sat in all day as the sun sundialled
Window-splays across the quiet floor . . .

Her body heat had entered the braced timber
Two would take hold of, by weighted leg and back,
Tilting and hoisting, the one on the lower step
Bearing the brunt, the one reversing up

Not averting eyes from her hurting bulk,
And not embarrassed, but never used to it.
I think of her warm brow we might have once
Bowed to and kissed before we kissed it cold.

—*Seamus Heaney*

ful concrete-and-glazed-terra-cotta design by a group of young Belgian architects. It was muted, modest, and sensitive to what one of the Belgians nicely called "Tirana's very difficult relationship with its history." The developer who owns the land for it sat in on the meeting with me. He is an ex-bodyguard named Fidel Ylli, whom Rama has known since the days Ylli ran an illegal kiosk café that Rama frequented as a young radical and razed as mayor. Now Ylli's company controls more than an acre of central Tirana, including a piece of land near Skanderbeg Square that Rama recently claimed for the city as "green space." ("Do I look like someone who pays three million dollars for a park?" Ylli joked to a friend.) He didn't like the Belgians' tower; he wanted to build one that included a bigger shopping mall, and was made of glass and steel, materials that wouldn't require special craftsmen. The jurors listened to him politely. They tried to soothe him, saying that with the Belgian design he would be giving Tirana a major European building. He wasn't happy, but he stopped complaining when Rama raised his hand and said, "Well, gentlemen, we don't need to dance anymore."

Rama works in a vast and extremely eccentric office on the second floor of City Hall. He designed it himself. He put in marble floors with the Tirana seal in the center, and an elaborate white-and-gold coffered ceiling that he had had copied from an old Tirana hotel. The walls are covered with a blurry, blown-up sepia panorama of the old capital. Everything else is red. Red armchairs you can wheel around in. A red-stained desk. A red-stained conference table with a centerpiece platter of dried Albanian plants and flowers that a friend collected and Rama sprayed red. ("My Max Ernst," he calls it.) When Rama isn't messaging someone or writing something, he sits at his desk, feet up ("for lumbago"), and makes fantastical Magic Marker drawings on the backs of discarded memos. He hasn't painted in seven years, but he never stopped drawing. He does his thinking that way. Often, his only company is a pair of large turtles, in a glass terrarium, which were prescribed as a cure for asthma by a doctor in Beijing.

People who knew Rama as a young man worry that politics has isolated him. He came to City Hall as an independent on the Socialist ticket—"collecting opinions," he likes to say. But two years ago, a few weeks after his reëlection, and against the advice of many friends, he joined the Socialists, hoping to take over the leadership, or, as he puts it, "to have an independent position within the whole left-wing family." It may have been his first serious miscalculation as a politician, given that the Party blocked him: the Socialists liked his lustre, but not many of them wanted an Edi Rama cleaning up their turf. Mustafa Nano, who calls Rama "the most bizarre Socialist in the world," told me, "Edi rang. He said, 'In two hours, I'll be a Socialist. Is this right?' I said, 'What will happen if I say no?' " And Vladimir Myrtezai—the painter who worked with him on the mural—said, "Edi wants to be a protagonist, whereas I want to live my dreams in my painting. We have stayed friends, but we don't see much of each other now." Even Aneta Rama, whom I saw in Detroit when she was visiting Edi's brother, told me that he had changed, that he often seemed tired, fragile, and distracted, that he wasn't the same person who had always needed her.

Maybe not. Maybe he's protecting a world he loves from a world he hasn't had time to mend. Or maybe he has moved on. "I have always had a few people as points of reference," he told me, the night before I flew home. "Now it's these architects. My project is them. And, to be frank, maybe it's also to fulfill my own ego, to be identified with something big in the eyes of everybody. I know that this obsession I have to make a big work, this identification with this city—I know it makes problems for me with my family, my friends. But for me Tirana is a mirror, an affirmation, a confirmation of my vision, or call it my will, or my person. This is something that comes from far away, like a destiny. . . . As for the rest, I'm not off message. I'm outside." ♦

BLOCK THAT METAPHOR!

From the Daily Oakland (Mich.) Press.

Huron Valley Schools Superintendent Robert O'Brien, who campaigned vigorously against the Michigan's tuition tax credit proposal in 2000, said the public will also stand firm on the issue.

"This is a shell game of trying to paint (vouchers) with different stripes, but it will get flushed out and be shown not to pass the smell test," he argued.

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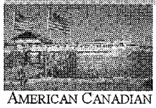
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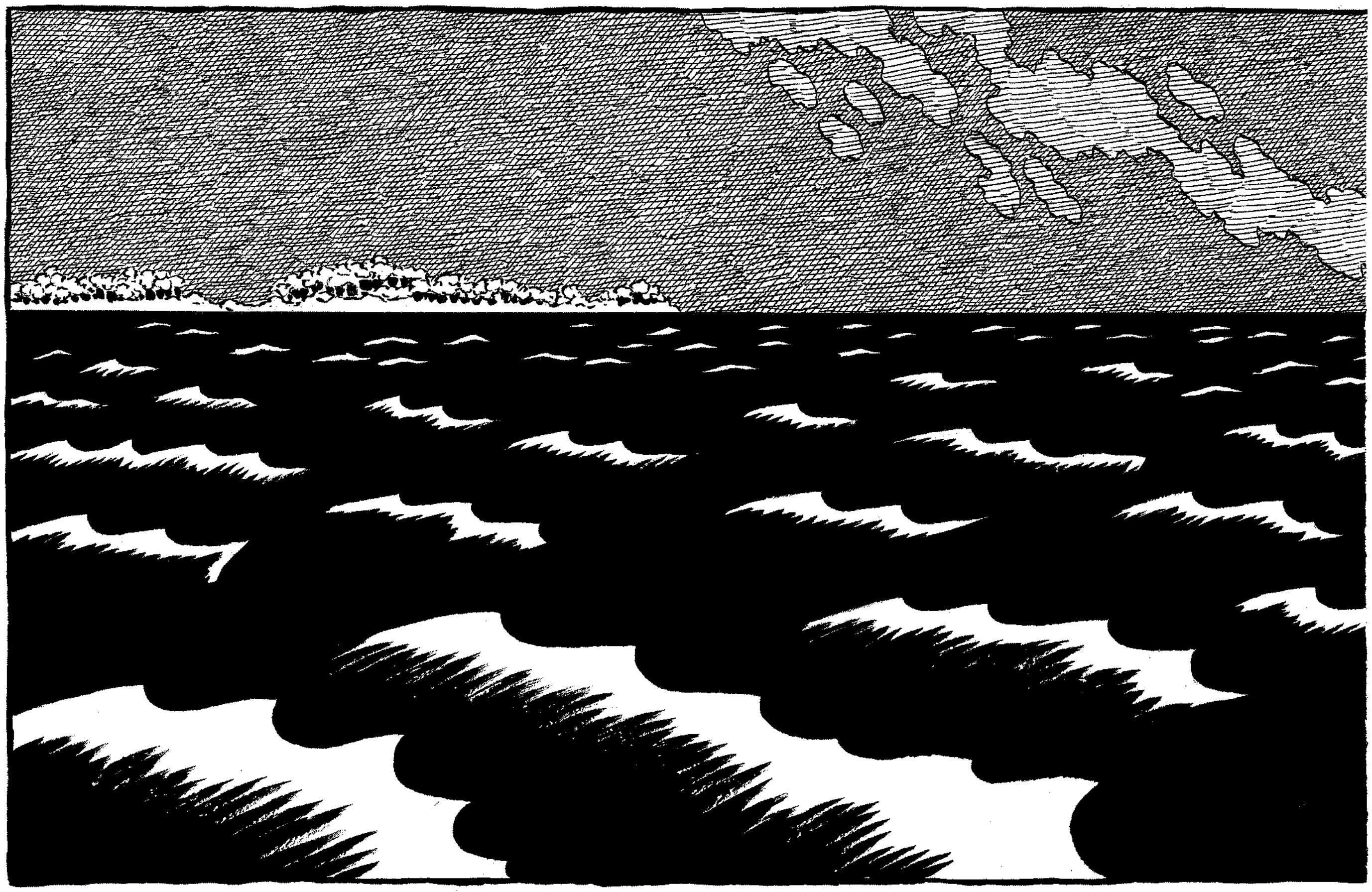


CHESTER BROWN

OUR FAR-FLUNG CORRESPONDENTS

THE CROSSING

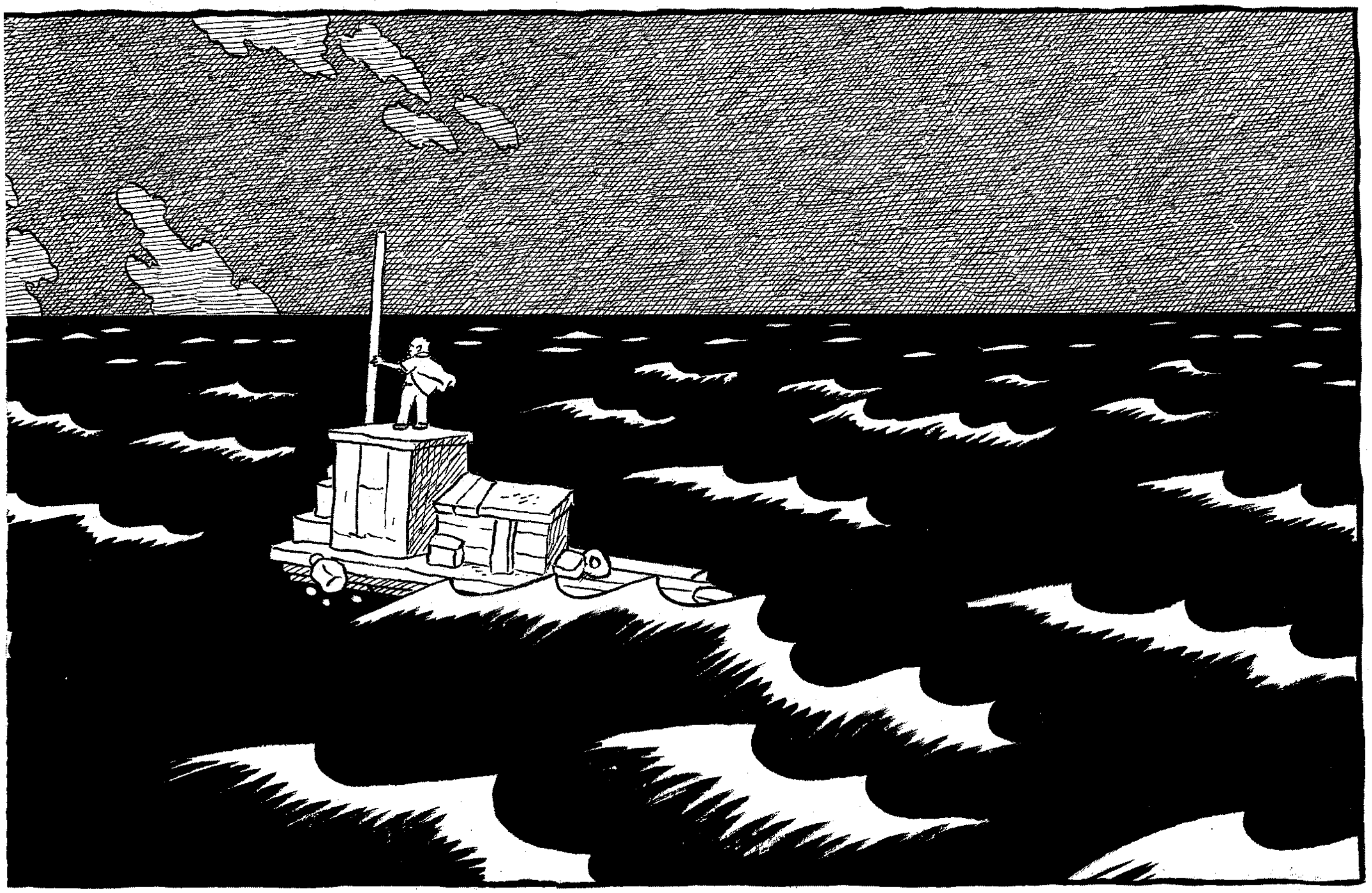
Poppa Neutrino faces the Pacific on a homemade raft.

BY ALEC WILKINSON

Twenty-one years ago, David Pearlman decided that he should have a new name, and began calling himself by the first one that came to him: Poppa Neutrino. A neutrino is an itinerant particle so small that it can hardly be detected. Pearlman, who was fifty, incorrectly believed that its existence was theoretical. The name appealed to him because, being suppositional, the particle represented the elements of the hidden life that exert their influence discreetly. Also because of the particle's capacity for unremitting movement. Mr. Neutrino is nomadic. I once unfolded a map of the country and asked him to trace the routes he had travelled, and he hadn't completed the first twenty years of his life before the pen had worn through the paper.

A year ago, Neutrino and his dog, a female Boston terrier, left Key West for California in a van he had been given by some friends. Attached to the van was a trailer on which sat a crudely made raft that Neutrino had built from plywood. Some of the plywood he had bought and some he had found thrown away at construction sites. The raft was twelve feet long and four feet wide, and it had a small cabin. People who saw it did not usually conclude that it was a raft. It looked like a tree house, or possibly a shed for poultry. It did not look like anything that would float. Neutrino planned to sail across the Pacific by himself, something that had been accomplished on a raft only once, by William Willis, in 1964, when Willis was seventy-one years old. Thor Heyerdahl, the first modern man to sail some ways across the Pacific on a raft, sailed, in 1947, with five companions aboard the raft Kon-Tiki from Peru to Polynesia. Neutrino regarded Heyerdahl and Willis as heroes.

Neutrino drove to Los Angeles and left the raft at a friend's house. While he was in Los Angeles, his wife, Betsy Terrell, who had been visiting her family in Maine, called his cell phone and said that she wanted to drive out West and see him before he left. They met in Phoenix, then Neutrino drove back to Los Angeles and retrieved the raft, and he and Terrell drove to Flagstaff to escape the desert heat. After Terrell had left, Neutrino parked the raft on its trailer in a storage lot in Buckeye, Arizona, off Interstate 10, near Phoenix, and drove to Los Angeles again. He now thought that if he could make it across the Pacific he could continue around the world and return to Key West. No one has ever sailed around the world on a raft.



Neutrino is about five feet nine, with broad, sloping shoulders. His forearms and hands are so thick that they look like tools. He has a square face, widely set eyes, and a flawless nose. From each of its wings a curved line descends to enclose his lips, like parentheses. His eyes are a chalky blue, like a glaze on pottery. His regard is direct and measuring. He is extremely vigilant. He has a short white beard and short white hair, which he cuts by gathering strands of it between his second and third fingers and clipping the parts that stick out. He began losing teeth years ago, and he has only two of them left, one in each jaw.

The first teeth Neutrino lost were the front ones, in a fight when he was fifteen. He found the teeth on the ground. It was a very cold night, and he pressed them back into place and pinched the gums, and, perhaps because of the cold, when he took his hands away they stayed where they were, and they were fine for fifteen years. He looked funny, though, because he had reversed them. In the center of his forehead is a scar he received one night as a young man when he came out of a bar in San Francisco playing a trumpet. A kid on the sidewalk asked to see the trumpet, and when Neutrino gave it to him he hit Neutrino with the bell of it right between the eyes.

Neutrino is implacably restless. He has never occupied a house or an apartment for more than a year. He finds possessions oppressive and, being an idealist, has tirelessly pursued an existence in which he would be free of all burdens. On the few occasions when he has worked for money, he has performed mostly day labor. When I first met him, through a friend, he was in Los Angeles, singing on the street. He had found a place that he liked on Venice Beach, among people who sold incense and beads and fragrant oils and T-shirts with sayings such as "If I'm Not Here, I'm Out Looking for Myself." The next day, when I called him on his cell phone, it sounded as if he was in a car that was moving and had the window open. I asked where he was, and he said about twenty miles outside San Diego. "I needed to get some motion under me," he said. He has three grown children, a son and two daughters. (A third daughter died from an illness in her thirties.) In addition, he has a stepdaughter and has raised two other children. When I asked Ingrid, the older of the daughters, why she thought that her father moved so often, she said, "I don't think he can help himself." I asked him once, "What keeps you moving?," and he said, "I wish I knew that." He thought for a moment. "What it comes down to is I don't want to ride the same horse in the same race tomorrow," he said. "I want to ride a different horse, or be in a different race." The solitary apprehension he has been unable to shed, and which has only deepened with the years, is that something significant might have happened for him somewhere if only he had stayed a little longer.

Like many people who behave capriciously, Neutrino believes that he acts only after much reflection. His idea of existence requires constant refreshment and renewal. If he has ever become so absorbed by a pursuit that he hasn't been willing to discard it for another that seems more appealing, I don't know what it is. I told him once that I thought his

When Neutrino and a crew sailed across the Atlantic on a vessel made from trash, he said they had "broken the scrap barrier."

behavior was inconsistent. He shrugged. "A series of incidents have created your present reality," he said. "Because of the forces involved in anyone's life, better situations are going to come along than the one you're engaged in. If you can break the alignment without hurting somebody, why not break the alignment? Death is going to break your alignment eventually anyway."

Neutrino is as profane a figure as I have ever encountered, but there is also something sanctified about him, something sweet and undefended and raw and noble—his insistence on remaining uncorrupted by material ambitions, his almost desperate responsiveness to joy, to being footloose and feverish, to moving forward with his arms opened wide and his eyes on the horizon. There must have been more like him in earlier times—chasers after stakes and claims, odds players, followers of the reckless and wild hope—especially among the citizens of the Western territories, where his ancestors are from.

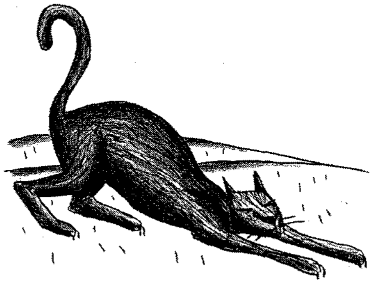
Neutrino was born in San Francisco in 1933. His bloodlines are motley. His father, Louis Pearlman, was in the Navy. He left on a ship shortly after Neutrino was conceived and never appeared again. His mother, Vilma McDaniel, married a man named James Maloney, who Neutrino believed was his father. He was raised as David Maloney. In 1966, Neutrino went to Vietnam as a war correspondent for a small newspaper in San Francisco. His second wife—he has had four—was the paper's editor. The security clearance he was required to obtain turned up his real name.

Vilma McDaniel was an incorrigible gambler. She liked dice games and lowball poker. Vilma was descended from a family named Farlow, from Lander, Wyoming. According to the Pioneer Museum in Lander, Neutrino's cousin Albert Farlow, who had short legs as a child and was called Stubby, is the cowboy riding the bucking bronco on the Wyoming license plate.

Neutrino spent his childhood in cheap hotels. Maloney worked as a fish-and-poultry man in a market in San Francisco, and on Monday mornings he drew money from his boss and paid a week's rent on a room. What was left over he gave Vilma to gamble with. Vilma would spend much of the day in bed, "reading and concocting schemes," Neutrino says. If she went out during daylight, it was usually to someone's house to play pinochle or gin rummy.

Neutrino's attendance at school was sporadic. Vilma would sometimes appear in his classroom and say, "David, come on, we're going," and Maloney would be waiting in a car at the curb to take them to Reno. He thinks that by the time he was fifteen he had gone to forty or fifty schools. "I was always being shifted around," he says. "And for some reason I loved this. If I ever wanted a more stable life as a child, I've repressed it." Now and then, in the stream of conversation that passed above his head, Neutrino heard the adults deploring the vagrant life he was subject to, and he would wonder what they could possibly mean. "It may have been a strange childhood," he says. "I suppose it was a strange childhood, but it was the best one for me."

Neutrino says he joined the Army at fifteen, having said he was eighteen. He was discharged at sixteen, and for the next several years he moved mainly along the track of Route 66, living the species of exalted life that Jack Kerouac later described in "On the Road." In Texas, he enrolled in a seminary and became a preacher. In Nevada, he gambled. When he was twenty-one, he arrived in San Francisco and met a group of bohemians that included Allen Ginsberg, Kerouac, and Neal Cassady, the man on whom Kerouac based the character Dean Moriarty. With his third wife, he walked for months through the Mexican desert. In New Mexico, he tried selling life insurance. In New York, he built a canoe in the basement of an apartment building. He planned to launch the canoe in the East River and sail to Cuba and shake Castro's hand, but the canoe turned out to be too large to fit through the basement door. He started a church called the First Church of Fulfillment, the first church in history that didn't claim to know the way, and it thrived for several months. In California, he formed a group of roughly a dozen people who travelled around the country painting signs and called it the Salvation Navy. So as not to pay rent, the Navy lived on rafts, mainly on the Mississippi River. "Mind you, nobody's interested in repeating the experience—not my children, not anyone else who was with me—but it defined their lives," Neutrino says. "It made them self-reliant. It gave them the power to know that no material obstacle could defeat them." In the nineteen-eighties, Neutrino formed a band with Terrell, her daughter Marisa, and Ingrid. The girls were five and twelve. Marisa played drums, and Ingrid danced. The band also included a boy named Todd Londigan, who played trombone. Londigan was the child of a woman named Donna Londigan, who played accordion, and whom Neutrino had raised. They called themselves the Flying Neutrinos, and went to New Orleans to play music on the street. Eventually, Terrell and Neutrino's daughter, Jessica, joined the band, and so did a girl they had adopted named Esther.



In 1988, the Neutrinos went to Provincetown, Massachusetts, where Neutrino was given a barge that the town had condemned. From parts of floating docks that had been thrown away and driftwood he found in the harbor, he and the family built a raft on the barge hull. Using scavenged lumber, they built cabins and two paddle wheels, one on each side of the bow. The paddle wheels turned by means of a motor that had been part of a generator discarded from the town hall, so Neutrino called the raft Town Hall. It was cumbersome and unsightly, but the paddle wheels, painted yellow and blue and red, gave the raft a rakish appeal. Neutrino decided to sail it to New York.

The raft made four or five miles an hour. It went, almost in slow motion, across Cape Cod Bay and through the Cape Cod Canal and down along the coast. In Newport, Rhode Island, Neutrino ran aground and had to be pushed off the beach by a bulldozer. In Narragansett, he was taken to court for refusing to pay mooring fees. On Christmas Eve, he ran aground in Southport, Connecticut, in front of a house that belonged to the actor Jason Robards. The paddle wheel was damaged, and a huge crew of people helped the family rebuild it. More than a hundred came to see them get under way once more.

"Of course, if this one flops we're done."

Neutrino had heard about a club on the Hudson called the Amazon Village, which was built on Pier 25, not far from the World Trade Center, and he thought the owner might be amused by his raft and let him tie up beside the club. When he docked, Neutrino says he walked up the gangway and was met by the actor Jack Nicholson, who shook his hand and said, "You've got a great-looking vessel." The owner, Shimon Bokovza, an Israeli, "built like a brick firehouse," Neutrino says, "very strong and very commando," came over. He took Neutrino to his security guards, "huge karate guys dressed in black," and said that Neutrino was to have access at all hours to the club and the pier and that no one in his party was required to observe the club's dress code. Neutrino spent the next four years coming and going from the pier.

A lot of people in the city regarded the raft as an eyesore. Kids threw rocks at it. They broke the windows so many times that Neutrino repaired some of them only with saran wrap. The Coast Guard told Neutrino that the raft could stay in the Hudson River but it couldn't leave. "Their vessel is grossly unsafe," Chief Petty Officer Alan Burd told a reporter from *Newsday*. "It's pieced together with scrap."

Neutrino had for several years thought about building a raft that could cross the Atlantic Ocean. He began walking around the city looking for materials. Floating in the harbor one day were four thirty-two-foot-long timbers that had been part of a seawall. Neutrino decided that they could frame the hull. Bokovza told him that he could build the raft at Pier 25. In Rockaway, in a bird sanctuary, Neutrino, Terrell, and some friends retrieved Styrofoam bricks that were floating among the reeds. People gave them wood. They made frames of two-by-sixes and filled them with empty plastic bottles, pieces of cork—anything that would float—then fixed all the objects in place with polyurethane foam. Then they covered the frames with plywood.

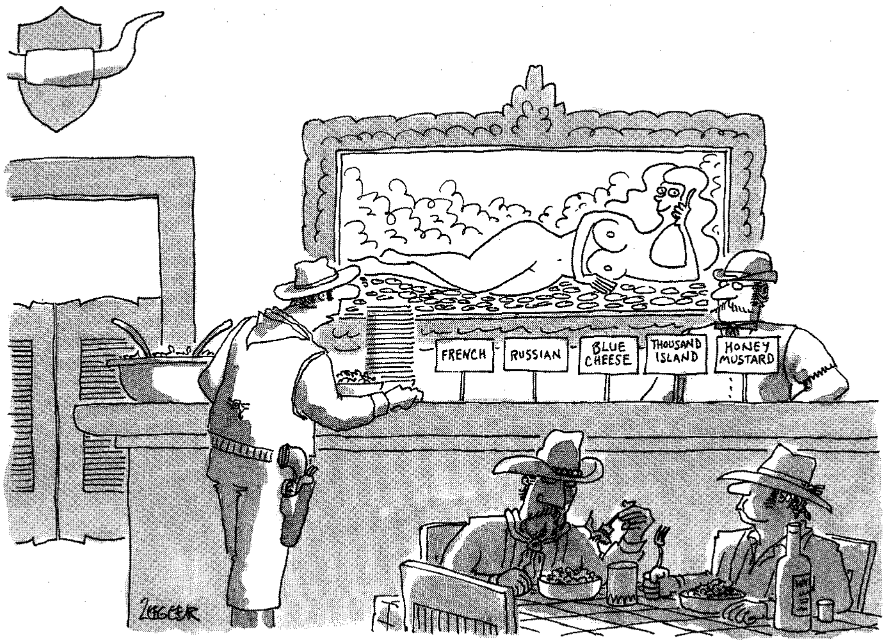
In a trash pile in Tribeca, Neutrino found a parachute, which he laid over a webbing of rope to make a sail. His idea was that the sails should be made not of one piece of material but of many pieces, so that repairing one would mean replacing only the section that had torn. Elsewhere in Tribeca, he and Terrell found in a Dumpster a coil of rope, about three thousand feet long, which the power company had got rid of.

Boats float because water can't get into them. Water invading a raft built with foam is a matter of indifference. Foam floats whether it is wet or dry. Water can come and go, except your feet get wet. "If a raft is unable to sink," Neutrino says, "I only had to make sure that it stayed right side up and did not come apart." A heavy sea can batter a boat or a raft to pieces—the wood splinters, the screws and nails are torn from their shafts. Neutrino drilled holes every two feet in the hull and the cabins of his raft. He fed rope through each hole, then knotted it and ran it through the next hole, so that when he was finished the raft was woven together like a basket. A structure held together by screws and glue and nails is rigid. A basket is supple. Even if all the carpentry failed, he believed that the raft would remain intact.

"Where did I get this notion? I have no idea," Neutrino says. "From the cornucopia of my mind. Somebody put it in there a long time ago, and it came out in this way."

When Son of Town Hall was ready to be launched, Neutrino threw a party. About a hundred people attended. They wedged pipes underneath the raft as levers and tipped the hull toward the water. Eventually, the raft slid over the edge of the pier, and dropped ten feet into the water. It landed upside down. Almost immediately it righted itself. The raft drew seven inches, exactly what Neutrino had planned. By the time the motor was aboard and the family's belongings—including the piano from the Amazon Village, which had since closed—it drew eighteen, which was also what he had hoped for.

Neutrino and Terrell spent a few months sewing the sails and buying food for the crossing. They decided that rather than leave for Europe from New York they would sail to Provincetown first and



"Oh, sorry. I seem to have bellied up to the wrong bar."

show their friends the raft. Before they could depart, the Coast Guard boarded them. The officers looked in the cabins and the engine room and inspected the sails and then, according to Neutrino, they told him, "No way are you going. No way does this vessel even leave the dock." The Captain of the Port, from his office, issued an order saying that Son of Town Hall was "manifestly unsafe." The phrase denotes the highest category of risk a vessel can receive, and it means that it cannot leave port.

The matter came into the hands of Michael Karr, a Coast Guard commander, who was the chief of the Inspection Department. Karr wanted to see the raft before affirming the judgment. No regulations or standards apply in the decision of whether or not a raft is seaworthy. "You know it when you see it," Karr says. We spoke on the phone. I asked if he had ever before seen anything resembling Son of Town Hall. "Let me think about that. Seen anything like it," he said. He paused. Then he said, "I'd have to say no. It was certainly not like any other homemade craft."

Neutrino recalls that Karr's inspection lasted several hours. Karr had heard of "Kon-Tiki," Heyerdahl's account of his voyage, so he knew that a raft is capable of travelling on an ocean. Son of Town Hall had outriggers, and wasn't likely to tip over. It had a motor. Careful thought had obviously gone into assuring its buoyancy. Karr asked Neutrino what route he planned to take to Provincetown, and they looked at charts together.

Karr sent his report to harbormasters up the coast. "I'm thinking, If Thor Heyerdahl could do it, why can't someone else?" Karr says. "It's a free country." Karr likes to point out that what he gave Neutrino was permission to leave New York Harbor and travel to Provincetown. He did not give him permission to "cross the open ocean."

Neutrino and Terrell sailed from New York on Son of Town Hall in the fall of 1995. They left Town Hall moored in the river off Pier 25, a privilege they believed was protected by maritime law. Aboard Town Hall were the family's clothes and books and photographs—everything they owned that they didn't want to take on the crossing. Developers saw the raft as a blight on the waterfront. They felt that it would encourage other transients to build rafts, with the result that the riverfront would become a floating slum. A state official said he would have the Neutrinos evicted. Another told the *Daily News*, "It is time for the Flying Neutrinos to stop being the floating neutrinos and get out of the river."

In May of 2000, the Hudson River Park Trust towed the raft upriver. As Town Hall was being lifted by a crane, one of the straps supporting it gave way. The raft fell to the river and broke apart, and the Neutrinos' belongings floated away or sank.

Rafts: Neutrino's hero William Willis made two trips on the Pacific in rafts. The first, in 1954, when he was sixty-one, took him from Peru to Samoa, six thousand seven hundred miles. (Heyerdahl had sailed four thousand three hundred miles.) The second, begun in 1963, when he was sixty-nine, took him from Peru to Australia, nearly ten thousand miles, the longest raft trip ever. The first trip was made on a raft built from balsa logs lashed together, in imitation of Heyerdahl, and the second trip was made on a raft built from steel pipes and pontoons filled with foam.

Willis was born in Hamburg, Germany, in 1893. He was fifteen when he began working aboard sailing ships. He moved to America when he was seventeen. In addition to being a merchant sailor, he was a longshoreman in California, a logger in Alaska, California, and the Pacific Northwest, a hand in the wheat harvests on the Great Plains, and a rig builder in the Texas oil fields. He also wrote six books, among them a book of poems called "Hell, Hail and Hurricanes."

Willis married a theatrical agent in New York who had an office in Rockefeller Center. For his first trip across the Pacific, he read charts of the tides and currents in the map room of the New York Public Library, on Forty-second Street. He left Peru in June of 1954. He took with him a black cat and a parrot. The cat killed the parrot. To keep himself awake, he ate raw sugar and drank instant coffee.

As he sat through storms, he wondered how much his raft could take before it would come apart. Fishing for dolphin one day, he caught a shark and, in retrieving the hook, he fell overboard. The raft sailed away without him. He realized that the fishing line wrapped around his wrist was attached to the raft. The line was frayed. If it snapped, Willis was lost. About two hundred feet lay between Willis and the raft. Hand over hand, he began pulling himself toward it. The line cut his hand deeply, and the water around him filled with blood. He wondered where the sharks were that had been following him for days, and particularly one about nine feet long whom he called Long Tom and who for weeks had seemed to be underneath the raft or just behind it. When he finally reached the raft and hauled himself aboard, he found a needle and thread and sewed his hand.

Willis was about halfway across the Pacific when he discovered that salt had corroded the seams of his water cans and almost all his water had leaked out. He allowed himself one cup a day, which he supplemented by drinking one cup of seawater. He was careful to dip his cup in the water only when he was sure no sharks were around. He often dreamed of New York, where his wife was. Lying one afternoon asleep on the deck with a shirt over his head, he woke when the raft moved, and in a wave that loomed above him he plainly saw a shark that looked ready to attack him. He assumed the shark would be washed on deck. He jumped up to defend himself. The shark fell and the raft rose on the wave that had contained it. Occasionally at night, the phosphorescence thrown up by the waves as they struck the bow would seem to merge with the sky, and he would feel as if he were sailing among the stars.

He landed after a hundred and fifteen days at sea.

In the spring of 1996, Son of Town Hall sailed from Provincetown to Maine, and from there left for Europe with four people aboard: Neutrino, Terrell, Jessica, who was twelve, and their friend Ed Garry. They also had with them two Rottweilers and a little mutt they had picked up in Mexico. The first night, they were about thirty miles offshore when the wind rose to twenty miles an hour. Instead of steering downwind, the raft turned sideways, and Neutrino couldn't correct it. "I realized then that I have failed utterly," he says. "No way we're going to make it across the Atlantic sideways." They waited for the storm to pass, then they put in at Portland. They were tied up at the dock, broke and discouraged, when Neutrino, seated on a stool and opening a can of beer, passed out and fell backward into a basin filled with dirty water. He'd had a heart attack. For nearly two weeks, he lay in intensive care.

While he was recovering, a ship struck a piling in Portland Harbor and spilled some oil. Representatives from an insurance company went through the harbor settling claims. They gave the Neutrinos fifty-five hundred dollars, because oil had got into the raft's foam and shrunk it. With the money, Neutrino made a daggerboard out of sheets of plywood he bolted together. They took the raft to sea, and when the wind rose they dropped the daggerboard, and the raft sailed downwind.

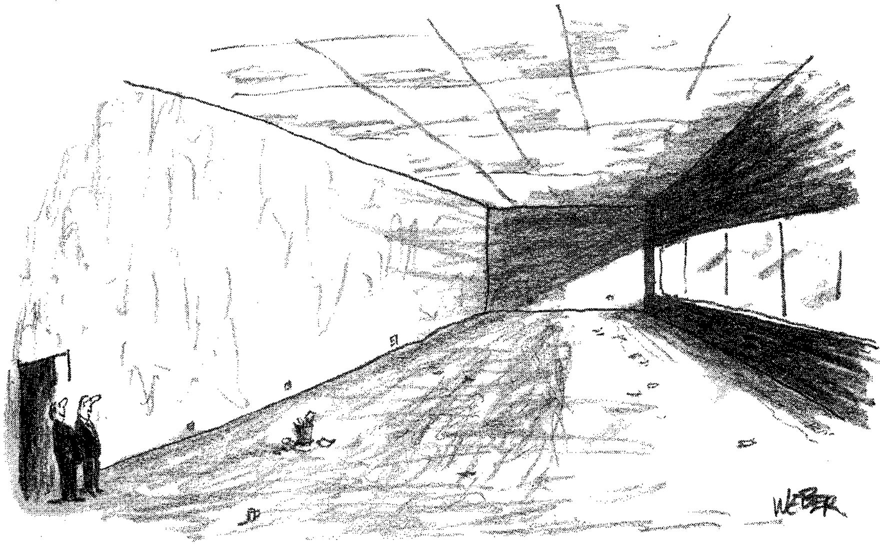
They put in by the shipyards at Bath. A friend named Rodger Doncaster took Jessica's place. Doncaster didn't know how to sail. In June of 1997, moving so slowly that they left almost no wake, they headed for the ocean. Neutrino was exhausted but also elated to be under way.

"To launch this expedition after all the setbacks and obstacles, to hold on when the will to say hold on was gone, to go against all the harbormasters that ridiculed this vessel, the police who came to drive it off public property, the near-impossibility of financing it on our own, the heart attack, and the failures of design we had to correct—all of it drove me to my deepest, deepest despair," he says. "We had taken this wood from the streets of New York and set it in motion, and now either we'll make it or we won't."

On the third day out, the sky darkened and the wind picked up. The waves grew to almost twenty feet. Rain fell heavily. Neutrino sat in the stern, in the cockpit, which was raised above the deck, steering. The first big wave loomed over them like a wall. They waited for it to collapse on their heads. Instead, the raft rose suddenly. Then the deck tilted toward the vertical, and Neutrino was suspended aloft. "It seemed like I was looking straight down from the top of a building," he says. Being held like an arrow at the end of a taut bowstring was not anything he had imagined before. He thought the raft would topple over, throwing him into the water with all the weight of it behind him.

"I thought, I'd done all this work, made all these plans, come this far, only to get out here and kill everybody." It was, he says, "the first and only time I ever remember being scared at sea. There must have been other times, but I can't recall them. This I recall." Instead of falling over, the raft slid down the wave like a sled down a hill. By the time it reached the bottom, Neutrino felt sure that it could take the strain. "She would have climbed up fifty-foot waves," he says. "I might not have taken it, but she would."

After that, the days passed slowly. The broad black backs of whales broke the surface off the stern. In a thick fog, the crew had a close call with a fishing boat that crossed their bow hauling a net. No one had taught them how to read their radar, so eventually they learned on their own that the shapes on the screen were not always other boats—they might also be storms—and that sometimes boats close enough to harm them might not show up at all. It was much colder than they had expected July on the ocean to be. The fog made the air clammy, and the damp cold worked its way under their



"Well, that does it, Charlie—we've outsourced everything."

watch caps and the layers of sweaters and parkas. In the North Atlantic, something called the "fifty-fifty-fifty rule" applies. If you fall overboard into fifty-degree water, you have a fifty-fifty chance of surviving more than fifty minutes. The water around them was generally sixty degrees.

On the first morning of their third week, Neutrino woke Terrell and asked for the nitroglycerin tablets that the hospital had given him for his heart. He took two of the tablets, and she put her arms around him, and he lost consciousness. "A gentle fadeout" is how he describes it. He came to with her pounding his chest and shouting, "Wake up! Wake up!" About a minute had passed. She put him to bed, and he slept. "We are all very badly shaken," she wrote in the captain's log.

Neutrino woke in the afternoon and got up, "acting like nothing had happened," Terrell wrote. He needed to drink more water, he said. They changed the watch schedule to allow him to rest.

The ocean appeared to be growing warmer, leading them to think that they were approaching the Gulf Stream. Halfway through the third week, according to the charts, they reached it, but their momentum seemed no different from what it had been. "All of us are exhausted," Terrell wrote. "All we do is sleep, eat, and take watch."

On the night of August 3rd, they hit a thunderstorm. Rain fell in sheets. The waves were steep and close together. Each one knocked the raft off its keel, sometimes by as much as forty-five or fifty degrees, "only to come sharply back and be hit again. Slam, slam. Very uncomfortable," Terrell wrote. "Nearly sleepless night." A day later, Neutrino called them together, and they agreed to go with the wind rather than fight it, which would take them to Newfoundland, about a hundred miles behind them. If the wind turned around, they would continue to France.

Through a ship they spoke to on the radio, they raised the Coast Guard, who arranged for them to be towed to Fermeuse, Newfoundland. They arrived on August 9th, after forty days at sea.

For nearly a week, a steady stream of people came to the wharf to see the raft. They brought babies and children. Men planted their backsides against the fenders of pickup trucks and folded their arms and shook their heads. Neutrino told them that the raft was unsinkable, that it handled the waves well, and that their biggest fear was termites. On the deck, he set up a keyboard, and he sang and Terrell played saxophone, and they sold CDs of the Flying Neutrinos.

The raft spent ten months in Newfoundland. Leaving Garry aboard, Neutrino and Terrell spent the winter painting signs in Texas and Arizona. On their way back, they drove to Nova Scotia to take the ferry and left their car in the parking lot. "It's probably still there," Neutrino says.

Neutrino, Terrell, and Doncaster returned in May of 1998. They had the raft lifted out of the water for repairs. The lift had a scale; the raft weighed seventeen tons. A month later, they put it back in the water. The Canadian authorities came to inspect it, and, after taking the raft for a test run, Neutrino and the others slipped out of Fermeuse when no one was around, early on the morning of June 15th.

"Don't you think we'll be memorable parents?"

A few days later, on the Grand Banks, Neutrino found that the engine would run at no more than idle speed. "It would move the raft just barely," Neutrino says. The engine's breaking down meant they had no way to get off the Grand Banks. "Picture the North Atlantic as a big basin," Terrell says. "The winds come across the equator and curve and circle the basin clockwise. The currents follow the winds. The middle is dead calm—the Sargasso Sea. Our plan had been to motor from Newfoundland to the Grand Banks, raise the sails, hook up with the Gulf Stream, and romp across to Europe, but we never on the entire voyage had any considerable current. On the Banks, the winds are confused, because you haven't yet really contacted the major ocean effects. We couldn't get a consistent current or wind, and almost as soon as we encountered the currents we were blown out of them."

Without the help of the wind or the currents, and without an engine, they were travelling about two miles per hour, considerably slower than a person walks. They were, in other words, walking very slowly across the ocean to France. The biggest challenge was to avoid being sent backward by the current. They woke one morning to discover that since they had last taken their position, the day before, the raft had traced a circle.

They ran short of fuel for the generator, and decided that they should use the radar, which relied on the generator, only in poor weather. Everyone had come to feel anxious, weary, and oppressed. On the open ocean, the raft looked like a spectre, a ghost ship, as if made from rags and rope and lumber, a vessel from the end of the world, something medieval, the flagship of nothingness.

One evening, Neutrino intercepted Terrell as she was headed toward the stern. She was going to jump off. The look in her eyes made him feel that she was no longer in possession of herself. "I want my children," she said, sobbing. "I want my children." He held her and talked softly to her for a long time, and she wept, and, little by little in the course of the night, she recovered herself.

Garry had the idea that, instead of fighting the current, they should sail with it and see what happened. The raft gathered momentum, and before long they intersected a crosscurrent travelling in the direction they wanted to go, and it carried them off the Grand Banks.

A few days later, Terrell was startled to hear a blast from a horn. She sighted a freighter about a mile away. The freighter was from Russia, and the captain was fascinated by the raft. On the radio, he asked if they needed anything, and they said fresh fruit and vegetables and gas. He circled them and brought the freighter alongside, which took an hour. The ship towered above them, and the wash tipped the raft. The captain sent a launch, and Neutrino and Garry went aboard. He gave them fifty pounds of potatoes, as well as oranges and apples and cabbages and beets and ten gallons of gas. The sailors waved goodbye from the deck. They took photographs. They yelled good luck. Their command of English was imperfect. "Thank you for your show to the world," the captain said. "We'll show the world this floating radish."

For a whole day, with nothing in sight but a dark-gray sea, Terrell could smell flowers, horses, "and a certain smell the earth has when it's been tilled and turned and has rain falling on it": the Azores.

They had intended to strike France, but Neutrino had grown uneasy at the thought that if they pointed toward France they might enter the Bay of Biscay and, without a motor, meet a circular current that would send them down the coast of Africa to South America. He insisted they set their course toward Scotland. They hit Ireland instead.

By the time they entered the harbor at Castletownbere, word of the strange craft approaching had spread, and the shore was lined with people. Every room in the town's bed-and-breakfasts had been taken. They were not the first sailors to cross the North Atlantic on a raft. They were the second. A Canadian named Henri Beaudout had done it in 1956. They were the first to cross on a raft made from garbage. The crew were so exhausted that they had difficulty thinking straight. They accepted a tow. They sat on the deck in lawn chairs and waved to the people. Neutrino turned to Doncaster and said, "Give us a comment."

Doncaster looked off at the water, thinking, then he looked back at Neutrino and said, "We have done the impossible."

Neutrino told reporters that they had "broken the scrap barrier." They had been at sea for sixty days.

During the first week of August, 2004, Neutrino and I met up in Los Angeles. He had business to dispose of in Tucson, and I drove there with him. Neutrino wanted me to be comfortable in his van, so he vacuumed it. Because he couldn't get all the dog hair off the passenger's seat, he covered it with a coat. Like a Frenchwoman from the historical past, Neutrino often applies perfume instead of bathing. He uses the cheapest fragrances he can find, typically ones he buys at a drugstore. We were going to cross the Mojave Desert. Neutrino thought that he could cool the van with ice. He bought four plastic laundry baskets and put them in the back, beside his bed. Before he picked me up, he filled them with ice cubes.

We left after breakfast. By the time we reached Palm Springs, the day was hot. The sky was a pale blue. On the dashboard was a paperback copy of the Bhagavad Gita. The dog sat between us, on a blanket. Now and then, Neutrino would open a bottle of water and pour some of it on the dog. The water would splash on me, but I don't think he knew it, because he was watching the road. Then he would pat the dog, and more water would spray off her. Then the dog would shake. Every few minutes, Neutrino would stick one hand behind him and wave it around. "Yeah, that's working," he'd say. "I can really feel it now. You feel it?" About once an hour, we would stop and empty the water from the baskets, and every two hours we would buy more ice.

In the desert, the land was dry and puckered like the skin of a raisin. In places, there were so many high-tension wires that they divided the sky like lines on music paper. Every so often we crossed bridges over dried-up rivers. The riverbed and the land around it were the color of linen and looked more like a beach than a riverbed. A sign said one of them was the Gila River.

That afternoon, near Phoenix, we left the highway and drove south through fields and past warehouses and stores and empty lots until we came to Buckeye, and a building that was low and long, with a roof hanging over the front of it, shading the door. A handsome, dark-haired Mexican woman was sweeping the doorway, and when we turned into the parking lot she stopped and went inside. A man with black hair and a face the color of tobacco came out. Neutrino said, "Remember me?" The man smiled and nodded and said hello. "I just wanted to show my friend the raft," Neutrino said. "That all right?" We followed the man to a dusty lot where there were a few trucks and beat-up cars and, on a trailer, like a rare bird among a flock of sparrows, Neutrino's raft. It was the first time I had seen it.

When I recall the moment, I feel my eyes widen. I expected a sleek, handmade craft, varnished and polished and elegant, a craft that would bear up to the life-and-death task being asked of it, a stylish vessel, and it was a scrappy, scuffed-up, bummy-looking, broken-down wreck of a doghouse on a bed of plywood. It looked like something a child had made. There was a cabin about four feet tall at the back of it, and in front of the cabin a deck large enough for Neutrino to sit in a chair. No seam was tight. Where there were gaps, you could see pieces of Styrofoam drink coolers. Some of the plywood was new and some was splintered and peeling and had weathered to a dark gray. The back of the cabin was made from a section of a sign that Neutrino had painted in Key West for Katha Sheehan, a woman he'd met who was running for mayor. Dark-yellow letters on a yellow ground spelled "atha for ayor." The effect of the colors and the lettering was festive. The boards were held in place by screws driven deep into the wood and at angles, instead of being flush with the surface, and the intervals between them were uneven.

"How long did it take you to build?" I asked.

"About four hours," he said.

I nodded.

"I designed her for speed," he said.

Neutrino pointed to where on the

sides he meant to install outriggers. Then he told the man he would send money for the next month's rent, and we got back in the van and drove toward Phoenix. When we saw a motel from the highway, I said, "That looks O.K.," and we pulled off and I got a room. We ate dinner in a Mexican restaurant where there were a lot of families and a man who went around the room playing guitar and singing. Neutrino gave him five dollars and spoke to him in Spanish, and they settled on a song for him to sing. Then we went back to the hotel, and Neutrino put a sign in the window of the van with my name and room number on it, and he walked the dog, then went to sleep on his bed in the van.

Neutrino wanted to launch the raft from Mexico. Then he would sail south to Peru, so that he could begin from the same place that Heyerdahl had. Late in October, he attached the trailer to his van and left Buckeye for California. He stopped for several weeks in Calexico, on the border above Mexicali. He had begun thinking that he would launch the raft from San Felipe, in Baja.

In Calexico, he worked a few hours each morning on the raft, then rested, then worked on the raft again. The work was fatiguing, especially because he had to muscle around heavy sheets of plywood by himself. At night, he slept in the parking lot of the Wal-Mart. By himself, in the van in the darkness, he would imagine being on the ocean aboard the raft.

When I called and asked how he was doing, he said, "I think I'm over the fear. Once you start, you don't come back, unless you're a failure. You make it, and you've reëntered Rome with a wreath on your head or you've died in battle. If you come back otherwise, it's in disgrace. Last time, with the Atlantic, I won, and, because I did, all kinds of things were possible for me. I'm down as the first scrap raft across the Atlantic. That's mine, it's locked up. No one can duplicate the feat, the century is closed. I'm starting on this new one, and it could be the biggest thing I've ever done. Old man circumnavigates the globe in a twelve-foot scrap raft. So I ask, are you going to let loneliness conquer you? I've made a break with my family. We've talked and said goodbye. I'm practicing with the dog in the car for the solitude. I talk to her at night same as I used to talk to Betsy. I'm alone in a shopping mall, and it's not pleasant, but I have to know that when I'm with the same dog, having the same talks on the water in the darkness, it'll be all right. I've adjusted my psyche and my attitude to it, and I think I have a high-percentage chance to make it. I've never had a raft trip fail. There are things I don't know, and can't know until I'm on the ocean, but if I knew everything already there wouldn't be any adventure."

By the end of November, Neutrino had collected in a storage bin in Calexico charts for the Sea of Cortés, life jackets, a G.P.S., pots and pans and a cooking stove, a motor, and two big watertight suitcases in which he kept video equipment. He still needed a certain kind of foam he called two-part foam, which had to be laid on by hand and would fill cracks and crevices, and some fishing net for his sail. Within a few days, he had got hold of the foam and had decided that he could find the fishing net in Mexico.

One evening around Thanksgiving, in the parking lot of the Wal-Mart, as he was lying down to sleep in his van, his chest constricted and his arms went numb. He said it felt as though someone were tightening an iron band around his chest. It felt about as powerful as his first heart attack, the one that had knocked him out and put him in the hospital for two weeks. For an hour, he lay on his bed. He found his phone and called a nurse he knew in Los Angeles. The two of them believe in other means of healing than conventional ones, and he said, "She sent me a healing over the phone."

He said he was going to rest for a few days. "I've withdrawn from contact with the world, more or less," he went on. "I'm going to play some music, drive around a little, then see how I feel about going back to work."

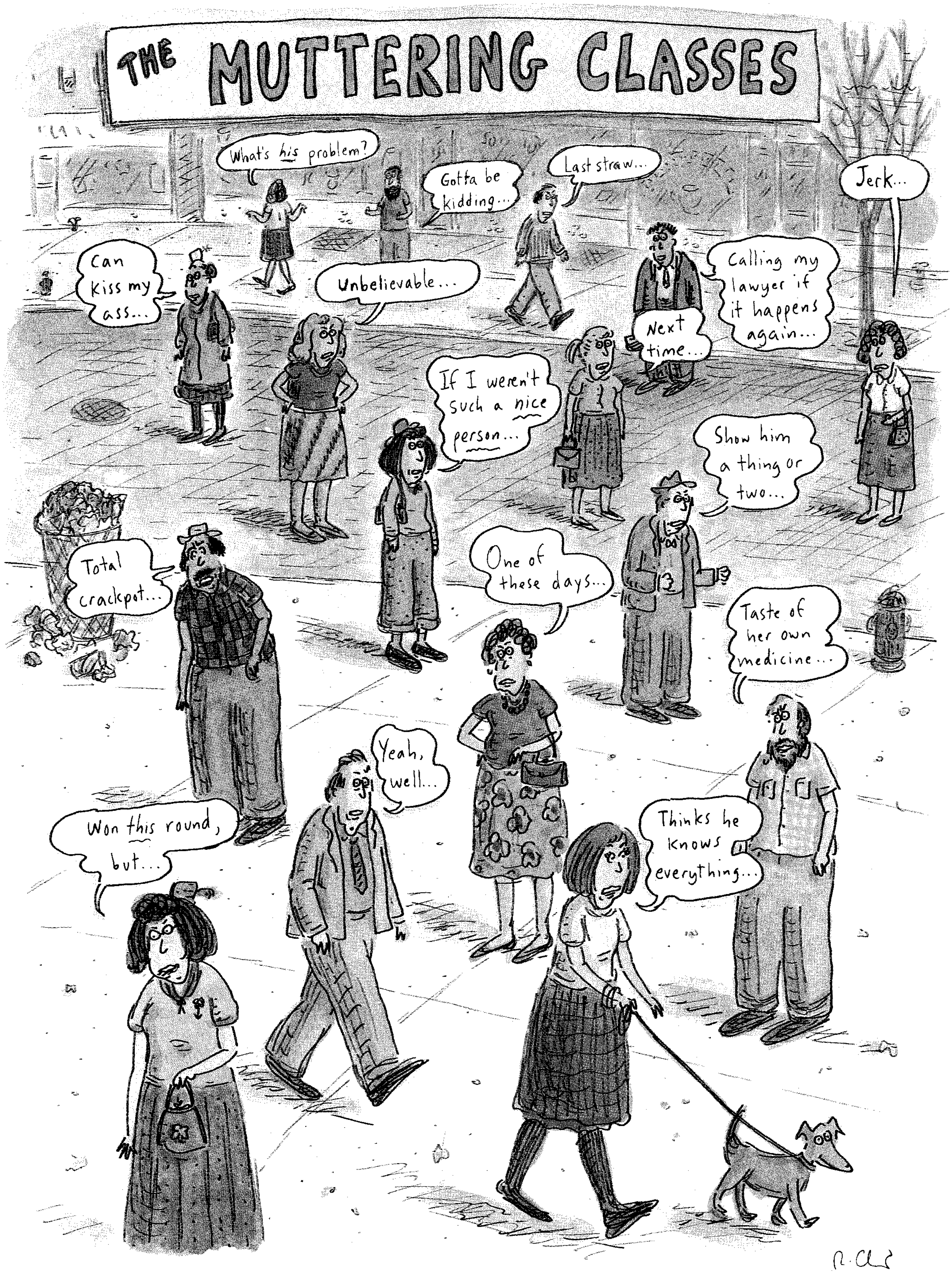
Rafts redux: William Willis started his crossing to Australia in 1963. He was sixty-nine years old. He built this raft in a boatyard in New Jersey, on the Passaic River. He filled three pontoons with foam, placed two of them in the stern and one in the bow, and welded them together with pipes. The raft was thirty-four feet long and about twenty feet wide and had the approximate shape of a sailboat. In May, he floated the raft down the river to Newark and had it loaded on a boat that was stopping in Callao, Peru.

Before Willis left his wife in New York, he persuaded her that they could communicate telepathically. He left Callao in July. In August, he saw her standing on the deck. He also saw his mother, who had been dead for years. In September, he developed the apprehension that his wife had been killed in a car accident. A few weeks later, he heard a voice telling him that he was doomed and that his only hope for saving himself was to abandon the raft and swim. He arrived in Samoa in November of 1963. In addition to being exhausted, he had a severe hernia. His wife insisted that he return to New York and be treated. When the doctors recommended surgery, Willis concluded that, before he could recover, his raft would rust and sink, and he decided to sail with the hernia. His wife wanted to go with him, but he wouldn't let her.

Willis left Samoa in June of 1964. Immediately, he had trouble with his hernia. To settle it, he wrapped a rope around his ankles and hung himself upside down, turning from side to side until it went back into place. The effort took several hours. He had to repeat it on a number of occasions. He arrived in Australia that September. He anchored the raft and waded ashore with his passport. It took him a little while to find someone to announce himself to. "I'm Willis from New York," he said.

In 1966, when Willis was seventy-two, he left New York to cross the North Atlantic in an eleven-and-a-half-foot sailboat named Little One. He called this adventure "the Oldest Man in the Smallest Boat." He had trouble with another hernia not long after he left, and was picked up by a freighter. He left again the following year. This time, he had bad luck with winds and had been at sea for eighty-nine days when, exhausted, he was rescued by a fishing boat. He waited a year for the favorable season and tried again. This time, the boat was found after eighty days, by a Russian trawler, but Willis never was. He had been seventy-four.

At the beginning of the second week of December, I flew to San Diego, stayed overnight, and the next morning drove east across the mountains and


THE MUTTERING CLASSES
What's *his* problem?
Gotta be kidding...
Last straw...
Jerk...
Can kiss my ass...
Unbelievable...
Calling my lawyer if it happens again...
Next time...
If I weren't such a *nice* person...
Show him a thing or two...
Total crackpot...
One of these days...
Taste of her own medicine...
Yeah, well...
Won *this* round, but...
Thinks he knows everything...

"I could sit here all day thinking about my problems."

• •

through the desert and then turned south to Calexico. Pretty much the first thing in town you come to is the Wal-Mart. Neutrino was parked at the far end of the lot. He was wearing a dark shirt and a pair of nylon shorts over his trousers to conceal his zipper, which was broken. The day before, he had walked into Mexico and gone to a bathhouse and got a shave and had his shoes shined. He wore a brown canvas trilby that he had cleaned using carpet cleaner he'd bought at the Wal-Mart.

We drove to his storage bin on the edge of town to retrieve his power drill and toolbox and some nylon rope, then we drove to a lot where Neutrino had parked the raft. The lot enclosed several acres of flat, dusty ground that was as brittle and hard as dry clay. Neutrino had parked the raft in the farthest section of it, past the rows of trucks and trailers and among the cars that seemed abandoned, as if they'd perished where they lay, like the skulls of cattle in Western movies.

Since I had last seen the raft, in Buckeye, Neutrino had raked the bow and insulated the cabin with Styrofoam. Over the Styrofoam he had nailed pieces of cardboard. The mast, some boards, and a big folding umbrella stuck out of the cabin, and we lay them on the ground. On the back of the cabin, it still said "atha for ayor." He thrust his chin quickly toward the raft. "I know you see this raft trip as my wandering off to the horizon and maybe into oblivion," he said. "That's all right. I don't mind."

He sat down. He leaned over and picked up his dog, and then he sat up. "To me," he said, "I see it as having a club in each hand and spikes on my feet and saying, 'Now, you bastards, now I'm coming after you.' "

The next morning, I left my car at the storage lot. Neutrino had once again covered the front seat of his van for me with his corduroy coat. Towing the trailer, the van moved cumbersomely. Neutrino was delighted to be under way. He sang. He told stories about his past. Beyond Mexicali, we drove through farmland; then a line of hills rose up on our right and accompanied us into the desert. Neutrino said that he had once tried to walk over them and found that they went on for miles. They were brown when we started and as the sky grew darker they turned blue. A quarter moon appeared above them. The road had been built on a bed raised up from the desert. Every few miles there were shrines to fatal accidents.

San Felipe is about a hundred and twenty miles south of Calexico. After three hours, we were roughly twenty-five miles short of it. Night had fallen. The desert was so dark and still that it was as if someone had turned out the lights and left. Each time the van climbed even the gentlest incline, the transmission slipped and the engine raced briefly before falling into gear again. Even before Neutrino said, "What's that?," I knew that the faint bumping that began suddenly in back of us was a tire on the trailer going flat.

Neutrino drove the car off the road and into the desert. The rim had shredded the tire. Neutrino had no spare. The raft was pitched about fifteen degrees to one side. Neutrino turned off the van's headlights to save the battery. The darkness rushed right up to the windows. He said, "Let's pray." Then he walked off into the desert and stood awhile, thinking. When he came back, he said that we should leave the raft for the night and find a place to stay. As we drove away, I watched the raft, illuminated by the taillights, grow smaller and smaller in the sideview mirror until the darkness enclosed it.

In the morning, we drove to San Felipe and found a man at a tire shop who said he could retrieve the raft and fix the tire. San Felipe turned out to be an impoverished little town on the water, with fishing boats on the beach. Some of the streets were paved and some weren't. Along the main street were several forlorn-looking hotels painted in pastel colors and trinket shops and a few restaurants. Neutrino drove slowly through the streets. "Oh, if only I could see Dolores, not Marjorie or Florence," he sang. He drove so slowly that it was as if we were passing things on a river, holding them in view before releasing them. At one end of town was a small, muddy boatyard with a ramp. "Here's where we'll put it in the water," he said. The wind blew steadily onshore.

At the end of the day, we went to the tire shop to collect the raft. It had just arrived. The man we had dealt with—his name was Aleseo—was standing beside it and shaking his head. Neutrino paid him and pointed at the raft. "I'm looking for a place to leave this," he said.

Aleseo said, "What is it?"

Neutrino said, "It's a boat."

Aleseo began laughing.

Neutrino pointed at his chest and said, "*Cruzo* Atlantic." He showed him a newspaper clipping about the crossing. "Paree, Notre Dame, New York, Irelando, France," he said, waving his arm as if they lay out there in the desert.

Aleseo couldn't stop laughing. He had black hair and dark skin, and he was wearing bluejeans and a T-shirt that said "Pepperdine University, Parents Weekend, 1995."

The next morning, we went back to the tire shop. Aleseo had said he would help Neutrino put the boat in the water. There was another man there, too. He was tall and gaunt, with dark skin and a mustache and thin lips. His eyes were small, and their expression was dull. He looked like someone I might see in a bar and sit as far from as I could. His best feature was a set of very white teeth. He walked over and asked Neutrino where he was going.

Neutrino said, "Peru."

The man grinned. In a dry, raspy voice, he said, "You want to dead?"

Neutrino, unfolding a finger at a time, said, "Mexico, Honduras, Peru."

"I know where is Peru," the man said. He spat in the dirt and put his hands in his pockets.

We got into the van. The dog climbed into Neutrino's lap and put her front paws on his shoulder. The man strode up to the window. Pointing at the dog and sneering, he said, "Food for the *tiburónes*."

I said, "What's *tiburónes*?"

Neutrino said, "Sharks." He shook his head.

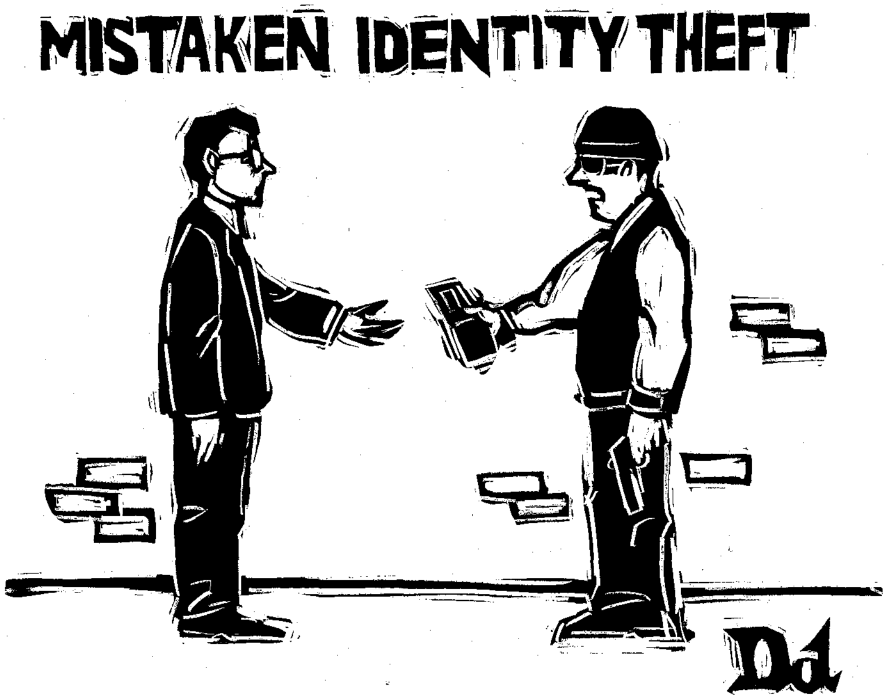
"You, too, old man," the Mexican said, and he jabbed his finger at Neutrino. "*Más* food for the *tiburónes*." It came out like a curse. Then he spat again and stuck his hands back in his pockets, pleased with himself. He watched us stolidly as we pulled away, following the raft behind Aleseo's truck. Skinny as he was, in the sideview mirror he looked like a nail driven partway into the ground. Neutrino sang the first lines of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow." The wind blew constantly, making the patterns of dust on the road seem as if they were part of some restless territorial migration, the subtle and relentless movement of the land from one hemisphere to the other.

We followed the raft into town. Neutrino drove without talking. He seemed to be brooding. I know that he believes in omens and engages in magical thinking, and I wondered whether the man's remarks had disturbed his peace of mind. When he finally said something, it sounded like a reply. "Until I'm stopped finally," he said, "I'm unstoppable."

Aleseo took us through town and then south a few miles to the port, where the big fishing boats were moored inside a breakwater. The water within the jetty was a greenish blue and scuffed with whitecaps. At one end of the dock was a row of fishing skiffs that rose and fell on the waves like a chorus line. Some fishermen were taking a boat called the Punta Estrella XII from the water. When they arrived at the top of the ramp, Neutrino spoke to them and learned that they thought the wind was too strong to fish safely. Neutrino came back toward us. He shook his head. He said he couldn't launch the raft. "We can't have a disaster," he said. "If I had the motor on it, and the power to move easily, maybe I could make a judgment, but not the first time. If I knock into someone's boat, and the captain of the port comes down, and he thinks I'm a jerk with no command of myself, and he says, 'Call yourself a sailor?,' I'm in big trouble, you follow?"

Aleseo maneuvered the trailer to the curb and out of the way of any of the fishermen using the ramp. He said he would come back the next morning at ten-thirty and help us try again. Neutrino set up a folding chair beside the raft. "Ten minutes, and I'm ready for another attack," he said. The wind whipped his clothes tight against his body. He looked like he was made out of sticks and padding.

I woke around four the next morning and listened in the darkness for the wind, and didn't hear it. By nine, when Neutrino and I went to breakfast, it had risen a little, but the boats had gone out. I had decided to leave the next day. When I made my plans to meet Neutrino, it was with the expectation that we would drive to Mexico, and he would launch the raft and leave. Clearly, he wasn't going soon. He hadn't even got the mast put up. I wondered if I had properly understood the experience of imagining yourself alone on the ocean, in the dark or under a tropical sun, perhaps hungry or thirsty or sick or in a terrible storm with, say, a broken mast, or even in the best of circumstances, wishing there was someone who answered when you spoke. And as an old man who had already caught the scent of his own death. The remarks by the witless man at the tire shop seemed to have cast a pall over Neutrino. It occurred to me that perhaps he wasn't ever going to leave, that he was waiting for something to come up, someone to contact him and say that they needed something done that only he could do, or to hear of a place he wanted to visit. In my mind's eye I saw the raft, years from now, among the skiffs on the beach in San Felipe, worked by a fisherman who had been destitute before Neutrino had given him



"Sorry, wrong guy."

a means of making a living, then had left for Maine or New Orleans.

I went back to New York, and on the thirty-first of January Neutrino wrote me an e-mail saying that he was waiting for a check that would arrive on February 3rd. With the money, he was going to pay for the permit he needed to travel for a year in Mexican waters and to shelter on any beach. He was also intending to buy "two hydraulic jacks, some pipe, a come-along to power the raft up on the beach when the sand is too soft to support the weight of the raft. Everything must be done here to insure the success of the project. There is no place south of here to get what I may need. I am playing chess with events and funds and raft parts. I am fully committed to crossing the Pacific. I have no plans to return to the United States until after the trip. I have everything I need to succeed, except how to spell these damn words, and I don't need that particular talent to pull this off." (I have corrected the mistakes.) "I am in prime position and it will never come again for me. On the fourth or fifth of February I will put the raft in the water, immediately move onto the raft, proceed to accomplish going on the beach and off the beach. After that is accomplished I will leave the harbor either on my own or by tow south. The story is in me of crossing the Pacific on a scrap raft and practically no money. My random mind will find a way to accomplish the task."

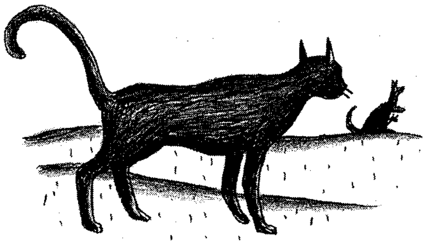
The next day, I went back to Mexico, and on the main street of San Felipe I found Neutrino walking his dog. He was wearing sweatpants and a corduroy coat and a straw boater with a black band. The brim of the boater had been chewed by his dog. For the next few days, we went around San Felipe in my car doing errands—Neutrino had sold his van. At a flea market, we found a jack and a pair of secondhand sneakers for Neutrino. We engaged Aleseo to drive the boat on its trailer to the harbor and, with a group of fishermen watching us and hoping that it would sink, Neutrino launched it and brought it around to the beach in front of a campground. He found someone to haul the raft to the top of the beach, where it would be on level ground and above the reach of the tide. When the task was completed, Neutrino unhooked the towrope and said, "I have a home."

The raft still had no mast. When I began adding up the things that remained to be done before Neutrino could sail, it became clear to me that, despite the urgency of his message, once again he wasn't leaving soon. It came time for me to go, and he walked me to my car. We stood for a moment without speaking. "Remember, this isn't the old man who rides into the sea and that's the end of it," he said. "This is just the link to the legend."

We embraced. "Until I'm stopped permanently," he said, "I'm unstoppable."

Early in March, Neutrino sent me an e-mail saying that he was putting the raft in the water on March 21st and leaving San Felipe on the twenty-third, so I went back. I arrived on the twentieth. He had made the raft much larger; it was now thirty-two feet long and had two cabins. He had the sail up when I got there. He had sewn the sail from burlap he found in Calexico. It was rigged with yellow nylon rope secured to the sail by duct tape. The rigging seemed complicated, and I asked how he had thought of it. "It's an abortion of a system I saw in a picture of a Chinese junk," he said.

The raft itself was strange and arresting but beautiful. For the wild specificity of it, the simple there-is-nothing-else-like-this-in-the-entire-world quality, it put me in mind of the Watts Towers, in Los Angeles, made from bottles and concrete and pieces of glass that the artist had picked up around the city. It still didn't look as though it would float. Neutrino had bought a catamaran, which he had lashed to the raft like a sidecar, to carry gas and water. From a prosperous boat owner named Larry Boyd, a retired contractor from Utah who had taken an interest in him, Neutrino had bought an inflatable rubber dinghy, called a Zodiac, which had a small outboard motor. Should anything cause him to abandon the raft, he could make it to shore in the Zodiac at almost thirty miles per hour.



A few days later, Neutrino put the raft in the water and drove it to the marina, where he could shelter from the wind. That evening, when the tide went out, we walked back and forth across the flats to the raft, carrying gas cans, water jugs, clothes, books, and Neutrino's chess set. He was going to leave the following morning.

The next day, March 26th, I opened my eyes and saw a line of red above the horizon, like a vein in a stone. It was five-fifteen. When I got to the harbor, just before daylight, the tide was out, and the raft wasn't where it had been the night before. I thought that Neutrino had already left. Then I found it in deeper water, out by the big shrimpers, which loomed above it like judges. I ran down the breakwater, nearly to the end, before I was even with where the raft was, about a hundred feet off the jetty. All over the harbor, I could hear gulls barking, disputing territory—it's mine; no, it's mine. I watched the raft change color in the rising light, as if, having blushed, it were composing itself. Then I heard the door hinges creak, and Neutrino stepped out onto the deck.

We waved to each other. The raft turned slowly on its mooring, as if preparing to say something, and then, having thought better of it, swung slowly away. As the light increased, the gulls fell silent. The sun was high enough now to illuminate textures and shapes and, for a moment, with the colors so rich, I felt as if everything were being tuned to one enormous chord. At the other end of the breakwater, I saw two figures making their way toward me, stepping carefully over the rocks. The man with the coffee cup in his hand, wearing shorts and a sweatshirt, and with binoculars around his neck, turned out to be Larry Boyd. He said that his wife, Eva, was behind him. While we were talking, Neutrino appeared again on the deck. He was wearing his corduroy coat. He climbed to the roof of the cabin. Boyd yelled, "Good morning, Captain." He sipped his coffee. "He needs to get going," he said. "He's got to trust me. I tried to tell him that this was a mean piece of water. There's a storm coming down from California, and every time they get a strong Santa Ana wind we get a norther."

Boyd raised his binoculars to his eyes. "He needs to get around that point before the wind kicks up," he said. Neutrino had climbed down to the rear deck. He seemed to be examining something over the stern. "Looks like he's going to try and start that motor," Boyd said. "I'm wondering if that old boy can pull that motor hard enough to start it." Then: "We're wasting good time here, Captain."

Eva arrived and asked, "Is he up?"

"No, the anchor's still down," Larry said. She was wearing shorts and a green sweatshirt like Larry's. On the front was written "Haleiva," the name of their boat. His sweatshirt said "Captain Larry" and hers said "Admiral Eva."

Neutrino got the motor started. "He's got to get that anchor up and slide out of here," Larry said. Eva nodded. He lowered the binoculars. Neutrino disappeared into the cabin, then appeared on the bow. "He's upping anchor now," Larry said. Eva knelt and took a video camera from her bag. It was six-thirty. Neutrino went back into the front cabin. In a moment, he appeared on the stern and pointed a video camera at us.

"You haven't got time for pictures," Larry yelled.

"Don't rush me," Neutrino said.

Neutrino drove the raft in a small circle, then cut the motor and drifted. He went around the hull checking his lines and tied some new knots on the catamaran. Two other friends arrived, Catalina Meders and her husband, Ed. They owned a bookstore in town.

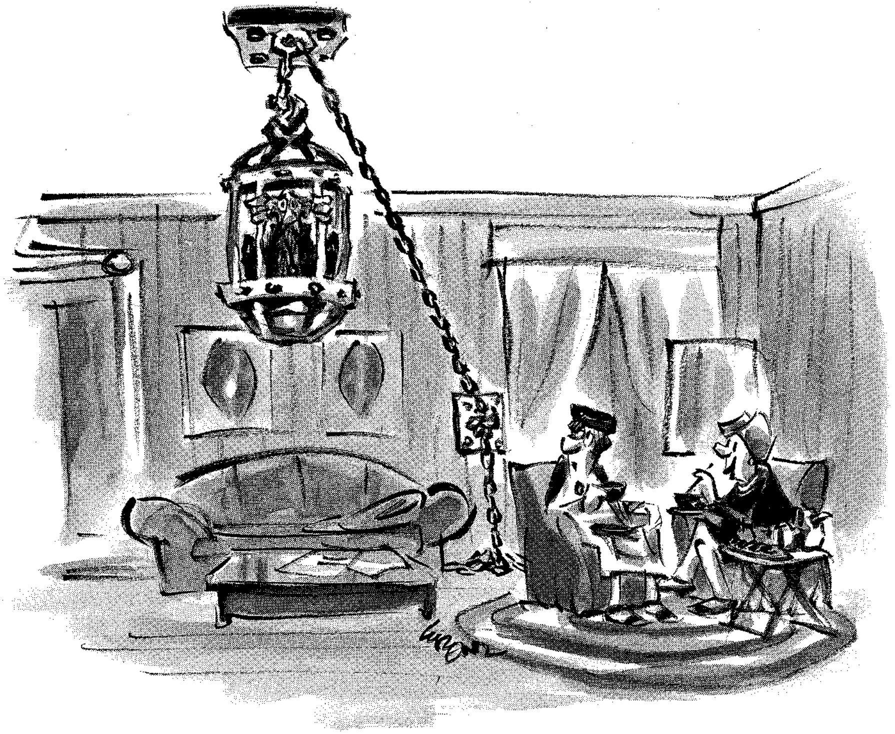
Through Larry's binoculars I saw Neutrino bend over, then stand and give the thumbs-up sign. He started the motor and wheeled the boat around so that it pointed toward the opening in the breakwater and made his way slowly toward it.

"Fair winds, calm seas," Eva yelled.

"Punch it," Larry yelled. "I know the road."

It happened to be Semana Santa, Holy Week. Someone lit a firework on the beach. It rose above the water and made a small bright mark on the sky, like a light turned on in a daylit room. At the detonation that followed, flocks of waterbirds lifted themselves from the rocks and the riggings of the shrimpers and took to the air shrieking.

Once Neutrino had made it through the breakwater, we climbed down the rocks to the beach and walked back to our cars. We arranged to meet at a café for breakfast. While they drove north, into town, I drove south to follow Neutrino. I parked at the top of a hill. For a while, the raft looked like a cup and saucer on the water, or an ornament on the hood of a car. When the sun caught its wake, it sent little silver flashes of light, like code. By slow degrees, the raft grew smaller. For a time, it seemed to travel like a snail along the horizontal line made by the wings of a telephone pole. Or, it occurred to me, like an absurdly slow-moving target in a shooting gallery. When I lost him in the light on the water, I walked back to my car and drove into town.



"Howard lives his life, and I live mine."

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I wondered how far he would go. It took two years and three false starts to get the Atlantic crossing under way. William Willis needed two years and three tries to get his Atlantic trip started, and he interrupted his Pacific crossing for eight months while he went to New York. It would be unreasonable to expect that Neutrino had built a vessel that would behave perfectly in all conditions. He might have to stop somewhere and exchange one version of the prow for another. Cabo San Lucas lay about eight hundred miles ahead. Neutrino was sure to take months to arrive. I knew that before long he'd have to put in somewhere to let the Mexican summer pass, and if before returning to the raft he took up another adventure—if he decided to walk to Asia across the Bering Strait, for example—I wouldn't have been surprised. His life was governed more by circles and wheels within wheels than by any linear design. (In fact, he decided to spend the layover hiking in Yosemite.)

Larry and Eva and Ed and Catalina were standing on a terrace by the café. From there, it turned out, they could still see the raft. When Neutrino was five or six miles away, not yet at the point, he seemed to drift toward the shore; then he recovered and headed for the point. We sat down at a table on the terrace. My seat faced the water. I could still see the raft, a barely discernible notation of color on the water. Strangely, some quality of the light made it black, as if it were its own shadow. I began telling stories about Neutrino and his past, about how as a boy he had put his front teeth back in the wrong order, about his mother and her gambling, about the Salvation Navy and the Atlantic crossing, and suddenly I realized that while I had been talking he had sailed around the point and was gone. ♦

FICTION

THE BLOW

BY J. M. COETZEE

The blow catches him from the right, sharp and surprising and painful, like a bolt of electricity, lifting him up off the bicycle. Relax! he tells himself as he flies through the air (flies through the air with the greatest of ease!), and indeed he can feel his limbs go obediently slack. Like a cat, he tells himself: roll, then spring to your feet, ready for what comes next.

That is not quite as it turns out, however. Whether because his legs disobey or because he is for a moment stunned (he hears rather than feels the impact of his skull on the bitumen, distant, wooden, like a mallet blow), he does not spring to his feet at all but, on the contrary, slides metre after metre, on and on, until he is quite lulled by the sliding.

He lies stretched out, at peace. It is a glorious morning. The sun's touch is kind. There are worse things than letting oneself go slack, waiting for one's strength to return. In fact, there might be worse things than having a quick nap. He closes his eyes; the world tilts beneath him, rotates; he goes absent.

Once, briefly, he comes back. The body that had flown so lightly through the air has grown ponderous, so ponderous that for the life of him he cannot lift a finger. And there is someone looming over him, cutting off his air, a youngster with wiry hair and spots along his hairline. "My bicycle," he says to the boy, enunciating the difficult word syllable by syllable. He wants to ask what has become of his bicycle, whether it is being taken care of, since, as is well known, a bicycle can disappear in a flash; but before those words will come he is gone again.

He is being rocked from side to side, transported. From afar voices reach him, a hubbub rising and falling to a rhythm of its own. What is going on? If he were to open his eyes, he would know. But he cannot do that just yet. Something like panic sweeps over him. He writhes; a groan wells up and bursts from his throat.

"Pain bad?" a voice says. "Hold still." The prick of a needle. An instant later the pain is washed away, then the panic, then consciousness itself.

He awakes in a cocoon of dead air. He tries to sit up but cannot; it is as if he were encased in concrete. Around him whiteness unrelieved: white ceiling, white sheets, white light; also a grainy whiteness, like old toothpaste, in which his mind seems to be coated, so that he cannot think straight and grows quite desperate. "What is this?" he mouths, or perhaps even shouts, meaning, What is this that is being done to me? or What is this place where I find myself? or even What is this fate that has befallen me?

From nowhere a young woman in white appears, pauses, regards him watchfully. Out of the muddle in his head he tries to create an interrogative. Too late! With a smile, and a reassuring pat on the arm that he seems strangely to hear but not feel, she moves on.

Is it serious? If there is time for only one question, that is what the question ought to be, though what the word "serious" might mean he prefers not to dwell on. He tries to touch the right leg, the leg that keeps sending obscure signals that it is now the wrong leg, but his hand will not budge; nothing will budge.

The young woman floats back into his field of vision. "No worries," she says, and blesses him with another of her smiles, her positively angelic smiles. "The doctor will be with you in a minute." And, indeed, before a minute has passed a young man who must be the doctor referred to has materialized at her side and is murmuring in her ear.

"Paul?" the young doctor says. "Can you hear me? Do I have the name right? Paul Rayment?"

"Yes," he says carefully.

"Good day, Paul. You will be feeling a little fuzzy right now. That's because you have had a shot of morphine. We will be going into surgery in a short while. You took a whack—I don't know how much you remember—and it has left your leg a bit of a mess. We are going to have a look and see how much of it we can save. We are going to have to amputate, but we will save what we can."

Something must happen to his face at this point, because the young man does a surprising thing. He reaches out to touch his cheek, and then lets his hand rest there, cradling his old man's head. It is the kind of thing a woman might do, a woman who loved one. The gesture embarrasses him, but he cannot decently pull away.

"Will you trust me in this?" the doctor asks.

Dumbly, he blinks his eyes.

"Good." The doctor pauses. "We don't have a choice, Paul," he says. "It is not one of those situations where we have a choice. Do you understand that? Do I have your consent? I am not going to ask you to sign on the dotted line, but do we have your consent to proceed? We will save what we can, but you took quite a blow, and there has been a lot of damage. I can't say right now whether we can save the knee, for example. The knee has been pretty thoroughly mashed, and some of the tibia, too."

As if it knew it was being spoken of, as if these terrible words had roused it from its troubled sleep, the right leg sends him a shaft of jagged white pain. He hears his own gasp, and then the thudding of blood in his ears.

"Right," the young man says, and pats him lightly on the cheek. "Time to get moving."

He awakes very much more at ease with himself. His head is clear, he is his old self (full of beans! he thinks), though pleasantly drowsy, too; he could settle back into a nap at any moment. The leg that took the whack feels enormous, positively elephantine, but there is no pain.

The door opens and a nurse appears, a new, fresh face. "Feeling better?" she says, and then quickly, "Don't try to talk yet. Dr. Hansen will be along in a while to have a chat. In the meantime, there is something we need to do. So could I ask you just to relax awhile?"

What she needs to do while he relaxes, it transpires, is insert a catheter. It is a nasty thing to have done to one; he is glad that it is a stranger who is doing it. This is what it leads to! he berates himself. This is what it leads to if you let your attention wander for one moment! And the bicycle: what has become of the bicycle? How am I going to do the shopping now? All my fault for taking Magill Road! And he curses Magill Road, though in fact he has been cycling Magill Road for years without mishap.

What young Dr. Hansen has to present to him, when he arrives, is, first, a quick overview of his case. As regards his condition in general, considering what can and does happen to the human body when it is hit by a car, he can congratulate himself that it is not serious. In fact, it is so much the reverse

MARIA MIESENBERGER, "UNTITLED (THE IMMIGRANTS)" (1993)/ROBERT MANN GALLERY

of serious that he can count himself lucky, fortunate, blessed. The crash left him concussed, yes, but he was saved by the helmet he was wearing. Monitoring will continue, but there is no sign of intracranial bleeding. As for motor functions, the preliminary indication is that they are unimpaired. He lost some blood, but that has been replaced. If he is wondering about the stiffness of his jaw, the jaw is not broken, merely bruised. The abrasions on his back and arm look worse than they are; they will heal in a week or two.

Turning to the leg now, the leg that took the blow, he (Dr. Hansen) and his colleagues were not, it turned out, able to save the knee. They had a thorough discussion, and the decision was unanimous. The impact—he will show him later on the X-ray—was directly to the knee, and there was an added component of rotation, so the joint was shattered and twisted at the same time. In a younger person they might perhaps have gone for a reconstruction, but a reconstruction of the required order would entail a series of operations, one after another, extending over a year, even two years, with a success rate of less than fifty per cent, so all in all, considering his age, it was thought best to take the leg off cleanly above the knee, leaving a good length of bone for a prosthesis. He (Dr. Hansen) hopes that he (Paul Rayment) will come to accept the wisdom of that decision.

"I am sure you have plenty of questions," the doctor concludes. "And I will be happy to try to answer them, but perhaps not now, better in the morning, after you have had some sleep."

That is not all, however. That is not the end of it. First the violation, then consent to the violation. There are papers to sign before he will be left alone, and the papers prove to be surprisingly difficult.

Family, for instance. Who and where are his family, the papers ask, and how should they be informed? And insurance. What coverage does his policy provide?

Insurance is no problem. He is insured to the hilt—there is a card in his wallet to prove it, he is nothing if not prudent (but where is his wallet, where are his clothes?). Family is a less straightforward matter. He has a sister. She passed on twelve years ago, but she still lives in him or with him, just as he has a mother, who, at the times when she is not in or with him, awaits the angels' clarion from her plot in the cemetery in Ballarat. A father, too, doing his waiting farther away, in a cemetery in Pau, in France. Are they his family, the three of them? *Those into whose lives you are born do not pass away*, he would like to inform whoever composed the question. *You bear them with you, as you hope to be borne by those who come after you.* But there is no space on the form for extended answers.

What he can be altogether more definite about is that he has neither wife nor offspring. He was married once, but the partner in that enterprise is no longer part of him. She has escaped him, wholly escaped. How she managed the trick he has yet to grasp, but it is so: she has escaped into a life of her own. For all practical purposes, therefore, and certainly for the purposes of the form, he is unmarried: single, solitary, alone.

Family: NONE, he writes in block letters, the nurse overseeing, and draws lines through the other questions and signs the forms, both of them. Motor functions unimpaired.

The pills he accepts are meant to blunt the pain and make him sleep, but he does not sleep. *This*—this strange bed, this bare room, this smell both antiseptic and faintly urinous—this is clearly no dream, it is the real thing, as real as things get. Yet the whole of today, if it is all the same day, if time still means anything, has the feel of a dream. Certainly this *thing*, which now for the first time he inspects under the sheet, this monstrous object swathed in white and attached to his hip, comes straight out of the land of dreams. And what about the other thing, the thing that the young man spoke of with such enthusiasm—when will that make its appearance? Not in all his days has he seen a naked prosthesis. The picture that comes to mind is of a wooden shaft with a barb at its head, like a harpoon, and rubber suckers on its three little feet. It is out of Surrealism. It is out of Dali.

He reaches out a hand (the three middle fingers are strapped together, he notices for the first time) and presses it. It gives back no sensation at all. It is like a block of wood. Just a dream, he says to himself, and falls into the deepest sleep.

"Today we're going to have you walking," young Dr. Hansen says. "This afternoon. Not a long walk, just a few steps to give you the feel of it. Elaine and I will be there to lend a hand." He nods at the nurse.

"I don't want to walk today," he says. He is learning to talk through clenched teeth. It is not just that the jaw is bruised, the molars on that side have been loosened, too; he cannot chew. "I don't want to be rushed. I don't want a prosthesis."

"That's fine," Dr. Hansen says. "It's not a prosthesis we are talking about, anyway—that is still down the line—this is just rehabilitation, the first step in rehabilitation. But we can start tomorrow or the next day. Just so you can see it isn't the end of the world, losing a leg."

"Let me say it again: *I don't want a prosthesis.*"

Dr. Hansen and Nurse Elaine exchange glances.

"If you don't want a prosthesis, what would you prefer?"

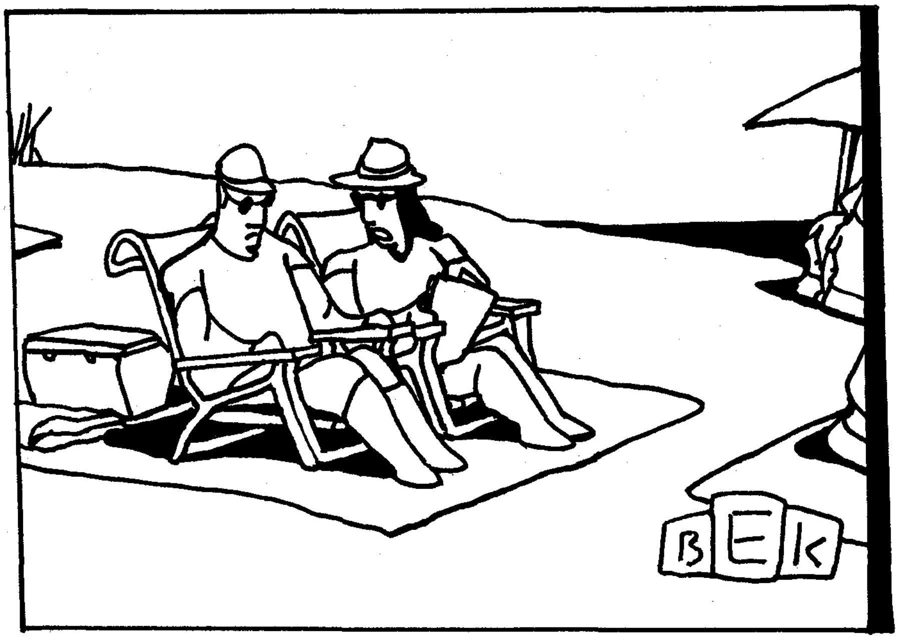
"I would prefer to take care of myself."

"All right, end of subject. We won't rush you into anything, I promise. Now, can I talk to you about your leg? Can I tell you about care of the leg?"

Care of my leg? He is smoldering with anger—can they not see it? *You anesthetized me and hacked off my leg and dropped it in the refuse for someone to collect and toss into the fire. How can you stand there talking about care of my leg?*

"Who did this to me?" he says. He cannot shout, because he cannot open his jaws, but that suits him, suits his teeth-grinding rage. "Who hit me?" There are tears in his eyes.

The nights are endless. He is too hot, he is too cold; the leg, enclosed in its swaddling, itches and cannot be reached. If he holds his breath he can hear the ghostly creeping of his assaulted flesh



"Just tell me when you've had too much sun and you'd like to get back to our intense sexual psychodrama."

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as it tries to knit itself together again. When sleep comes it is sudden and brief, as if gusts of leftover anesthetic were rising up from his lungs to overwhelm him.

Night or day, time drags. There is a television set facing the bed, but he has no interest in television or in the magazines that some kind agency has provided. He stares at his watch face, imprinting the position of the hands on his mind. Then he closes his eyes, tries to think of other things—his own breathing, his grandmother sitting at the kitchen table plucking a chicken, bees among the flowers, anything. He opens his eyes. The hands have not stirred. It is as though they had to push their way through glue.

Two weeks pass; Margaret McCord pays a visit. The McCords are his oldest friends in Adelaide; Margaret is upset at having heard so late, and full of righteous indignation against whoever did this to him.

"I hope you are going to sue," she says.

"I have no intention of suing," he replies. "Too many openings for comedy. *I want my leg back, failing which* . . . I leave that side of things to the insurance people."

Margaret shakes her head. "What a pity!" she says. "What a pity!"

Sweet of her to say so, he reflects afterward. *Poor Paul, poor dear, how difficult, what you are having to go through!* That was what she meant, what she knew he would understand her to mean. We all go through something of this sort, he would like to remind her, in the end.

What surprises him about the whole hospital business is how swiftly concern passes from patching up his leg ("Excellent!" Dr. Hansen says, probing the stump with a well-manicured finger. "It is coming together beautifully. You will soon be yourself again") to the question of how he will (their word) *cope* once he is set loose in the world again.

Indecently early, or so it seems to him, a social worker, Mrs. Putts or Putz, is brought into the picture. "You're still a young man, Mr. Rayment, Paul," she informs him in the cheery manner that she must have been taught to employ upon the old. "You will want to remain independent, and of course that's good, but for quite some time you are going to need nursing, specialized nursing, which we can help to arrange. In the longer term, even once you are mobile, you are going to need someone to be there for you, to give you a hand, to do the shopping and cooking and cleaning and so forth. Is there no one?"

He thinks it over, shakes his head. "No, there is no one," he says. By which he means that there is no one who will conceive it as his or her Confucian duty to devote himself or herself to caring for his wants, his cooking and cleaning and so forth.

What interests him in the question is what it reveals about his condition as viewed by Mrs. Putts, who must have had franker exchanges with the medical people than have yet been afforded him. From these exchanges, she has evidently concluded that even *in the longer term* he will not get by without being *given a hand.*

He sighs. "From your point of view, from a professional point of view, Mrs. Putts," he says, "what steps would you suggest?"

"You will need to engage a caregiver, that's for sure," Mrs. Putts says. "Preferably a private nurse, someone with experience of frail care. Until you are mobile again we would not want to take chances, would we?"

"No, we would not," he says.

The day nurse recommended by Mrs. Putts is named Sheena. Sheena looks nineteen, but her papers attest that she is twenty-nine. She is fat, with a hard, lardy, confident fatness, and under all questioning unshakably good-humored. He takes an immediate dislike to her.

When the ambulance men bring him home, Sheena is ready and waiting. It is she who reorganizes his bedroom for him, supervises the cleaning woman, instructs the handyman where to install rails, and generally takes over. She has already drafted a day-by-day schedule for the two of them, covering meals, exercises, and what she calls S.C.—stump care—which she tapes to the wall above his head. It includes three blocks, one in midmorning, one at noon, one in the afternoon, labelled "S.D. PRIVATE TIME," time during which she retires to the kitchen to refresh herself. So that she will not perish of boredom she keeps the radio on in the kitchen, on a station that alternates clamoring advertisements with thudding music. When he asks her to turn the sound lower, she turns the sound lower; nevertheless, without straining, he can still hear it.

The first test of his physical powers comes when, with Sheena supporting his elbow, he attempts to use the toilet. The sitting-down maneuver defeats him: the left leg, the leg left to him, is as weak as putty. Sheena purses her lips. "Back to bed at once," she says. "I'll fetch you the potty."

She calls the bedpan the potty; she calls his penis his willy. Halfway through a sponge bath, before dealing with the stump, she pauses and puts on a baby voice. "Now, if he wants Sheena to wash his willy he must ask very nicely," she says. "Otherwise, he will think Sheena is one of those naughty girls. Those naughty, naughty girls." And she gives him a playful slap on the arm to show that it is just a joke.

He puts up with Sheena until the end of the week, then telephones Mrs. Putts. "I am going to ask Sheena not to come back," he says. "I cannot abide her. You will have to find me someone else."

Getting rid of Sheena turns out to be by no means as simple as that. By the time her professional pride has been mollified he has had to fork out two months' wages. He wonders how often in her nursing career she has brought off coups on a similar scale.

After Sheena, he is tended by a succession of nurses from the agency, nurses who call themselves temps and come for a day or two at a time.

"Can't you find me someone regular?" he asks Mrs. Putts on the phone.

"I am stretched to the limit," Mrs. Putts says. "There's a huge demand for frail-care nursing. Be patient, you are on my A-list."

From being irascible he becomes sullen. He wants to be left alone; he does not want to speak to anyone; he suffers fits of what he thinks of as dry weeping. If only real tears would come! he thinks. If only I could be washed away in tears! He welcomes those days when, for one reason or another, no one arrives to take care of him, even if it means that he has to get by on biscuits and orange juice.

He blames his gloom on the painkillers. Which is worse—the cloud of gloom in the head or the ache in the bone that keeps him awake all night? He tries doing without the pills and ignoring the pain. But the gloom does not lift. It seems to have settled in, to be part of the climate.

In the old days, the days before the accident, he did not have what he would call a gloomy temperament. He might have been solitary, but only as certain male animals are solitary. There was always more than enough to keep him occupied. He took out books from the library, he went to the cinema; he cooked for himself, he even baked his own bread; he did not own a car but rode a bicycle or walked. If such a way of life made him eccentric, it was eccentricity within the mildest Australian limits. He was tall and rangy; he had preserved a certain wiry strength; he was the kind of man who might last into his nineties, eccentricities and all.

Well, he may still live to be ninety, but if that happens it will not be by choice. He has lost the freedom of movement, and it would be foolish to think it will ever be restored to him. The universe has contracted to this flat and the block or two around, and it will not expand again.

A circumscribed life. What would Socrates say about that? Can a life become so circumscribed that it is no longer worth living? Men come out of prison, after years of staring at the same blank wall, without gloom taking possession of their souls. What is so special about losing a limb? A giraffe that loses a leg will surely perish, but giraffes do not have the agencies of the modern state, embodied in Mrs. Putts, watching over their welfare. Why should he not settle for a modestly circumscribed life in a city that is not inhospitable to the frail?

He cannot give answers to questions like these. He cannot give answers because he is not in the mood for answers. That is what it means to be gloomy: at a level far below the play and flicker of the intellect (Why not this? Why not that?) he, *he*, the *he* he sometimes calls *you*, sometimes *I*, is all too ready to embrace darkness, stillness, extinction.

Has he given up? Does he want to die? Is that what it comes down to? No. The question is false. He does not *want* to slash his wrists, does not *want* to swallow down four and twenty Somnex, does not *want* to hurl himself off the balcony. He does not want death, because he does not *want* anything.

Unstrung: that is the word that comes back to him from Homer. The spear shatters the breastbone, blood spurts, the limbs are unstrung, the body topples like a wooden puppet. Well, his

BUYING RATIONS IN KABUL

The Uzbek boys on Chicken Street
have never had enough to eat.
They stock from shelf to shining shelf
these G.I. meals, which boil themselves
in added water (bottled, please).
In twenty minutes, processed cheese
on jambalaya, followed by
a peanut-butter jamboree.

The boys, polite,
advise on which we might prefer—
beef teriyaki, turkey blight—
and thank us twice for bringing peace
as, meals in hand, we leave the store.
Of course they know that any peace
that must be kept by force
contains another name. It's war.

—*Eliza Griswold*

limbs have been unstrung and now his spirit is unstrung, too. His spirit is ready to topple.

Mrs. Putts's second full candidate is named Marijana. By origin she is Croatian, so she informs him during their interview. She left the land of her birth behind twelve years ago. Her training was done in Germany, in Bielefeld; since coming to Australia she has acquired South Australian certification. Her husband works in a car-assembly plant; they live in Munno Para, north of Elizabeth, a half-hour drive from the city. They have a son in high school, a daughter in middle school, a third child not yet of school age.

Marijana Jokić is a sallow-faced woman who, if not quite middle-aged, exhibits a thickening about the waist that is quite matronly. She wears a sky-blue uniform that he finds a relief after all the whiteness, with patches of dampness under the arms; she speaks a rapid, approximate Australian English with Slavic liquids and an uncertain command of "a" and "the," colored by slang that she must pick up from her children, who pick it up from their classmates. It is a variety of the language he is not familiar with; he rather likes it.

After the misadventure of Sheena, he has no great hopes for the lady from the Balkans. In the days that follow, however, he finds himself grudgingly thankful for her advent. Mrs. Jokić—Marijana—seems able to intuit what he is and is not ready for. She treats him not as a doddering old fool but as a man hampered in his movements by injury. Patiently, without baby talk, she helps him through his ablutions. When he tells her that he wants to be left alone, she absents herself.

He reclines; she unwraps the thing, the stump, and runs a finger along its naked face. "Nice sutures," she says. "Who put in sutures?"

"Dr. Hansen."

"Hansen. Don't know Hansen. But is good. Good surgeon." She hefts the stump judiciously in one hand, as if it were a watermelon. "Good job."

She soaps it, washes it. The warm water brings out a pink-and-white flush. It begins to look less like a cured ham than like some sightless deepwater fish; he averts his eyes.

"Do you see many bad jobs?" he asks.

She puckers her lips, draws her hands apart in a gesture that reminds him of his mother. Maybe, the gesture says; it depends.

To himself he does not call it a stump. He would like not to call it anything; he would like not to think about it, but that is not possible. If he has a name for it, it is *le jambon. Le jambon* keeps it at a nice, contemptuous distance.

He divides the people with whom he has contact into two classes: those few who have seen it and the rest, those who, thankfully, never will. It strikes him as a pity that Marijana should fall so early and so decisively into the first class.

Rarely has he seen anyone throw herself as fully into her duties as Marijana does. The list with which she goes off to the shops comes back with the till receipts clipped to it, each item ticked off or, where she has had to vary it, annotated in her neat Old World hand with its barbed 1s and crossed 7s and looped 9s. From the tempests of her cooking emerge meals that are unfailingly appetizing.

To friends who telephone to ask how he is getting on, he refers to Marijana simply as "the day nurse." "I have hired a very competent day nurse," he says. "She does the shopping and the cooking, too." He does not refer to her as Marijana, in case it sounds too familiar; in conversation with her, he continues to call her Mrs. Jokić, as she calls him Mr. Rayment. But to himself he has no reservation about calling her Marijana. He likes the name, with its four full, uncompromising syllables. Marijana will be here in the morning, he tells himself when he feels the cloud of gloom descending again. Pull yourself together!

Whether he likes Marijana the woman as much as he likes her name he does not yet know. Objectively, she is not unattractive. But in his company she seems to have the ability to annul sex. She is brisk, she is efficient, she is cheerful: that is the face she presents to him, her employer; that is the face he pays for and must be content with. So he gives up being irascible and takes pains to meet her with a smile. He would like her to think that he bears his mishap gamely; he would like her to think well of him in all respects. If she does not flirt, he does not mind. It is better than coy talk about his willy.

Some mornings she brings her youngest child with her, the one who is not yet at school. The child's name is Ljuba, Ljubica. He likes the name, approves of it. In Russian, if he is not mistaken, *lyubov* means "love." It is like calling a girl Aimée or, even better, Amour.

Her son and firstborn has, she informs him, just turned sixteen. Sixteen: she must have married young. He is in the process of revising his estimate of her. More than not unattractive, she is on occasion a positively handsome woman, well built, sturdy, with nut-brown hair, dark eyes, a complexion olive rather than sallow; a woman who carries herself well, shoulders squared, breasts thrust forward. Prideful, he thinks, hunting for an English word that will capture her. Her teeth, stained yellow with nicotine, are the only objective flaw. She smokes in an unreconstructed old-European way, though for his sake she retires to the balcony.

As for the little girl, she is a true beauty, with dark curls and perfect skin and eyes that glint with what can only be intelligence. Side by side, the two make a pretty picture. Get on well together, too. While she is cooking, Marijana helps the child to bake cupcakes or gingerbread biscuits. From the kitchen comes the even murmur of their voices: the protocols of womanhood being passed on, generation to generation.

Weeks pass; he settles into Marijana's regimen of care. Each morning she takes him through his exercises, massages his wasted and wasting muscles; discreetly, she helps him in what he cannot do without a helping hand, what he may never learn to do unaided. When he is in the mood to listen, she is ready to talk—about her work, her experience of Australia. When he withdraws, she seems content to be silent, too.

Whatever love he might once have had for his body is long gone. He has no interest in fixing it up, returning it to some ideal efficiency. He still has a sense of being a soul with an undiminished soul life, but, as for the rest of him, it is just a sack of blood and bones that he is forced to carry around.

In such a state, it is tempting to let go of all modesty. But he resists the temptation. He does what he can to maintain the decencies, and Marijana backs him. When nakedness cannot be helped, he averts his eyes so that she will see that he does not see her seeing him. What has to be done in private she does her best to insure is done in private.

Where did she acquire this delicacy, he wonders, a delicacy that her predecessor so signally lacked? A decent woman, he thinks to himself, decent through and through. One of the better things that have happened to him, having Marijana Jokić come into his life.

"Tell me if it hurts," she says as she bears down with her thumbs on the obscenely curtailed thigh muscles. But it never hurts; or, if it does, the hurt is so much like pleasure that he cannot tell the difference. An intuitive, he thinks. By intuition, pure and simple, she seems to know how he feels, how his body will respond.

A man and a woman on a warm afternoon behind locked doors. They might as well be performing a sex act. But it is nothing like that. It is just nursing, just care.

He came away from the hospital with a pair of forearm crutches and something they called a Zimmer frame, a four-footed aluminum stand for use around the flat.

Under Marijana's ministrations, what she likes to call his leg is day by day losing its angry color and swollen look. The crutches are becoming second nature, though he feels more secure leaning on the frame. When he is by himself he roams on his crutches from room to room, thinking of it as exercise when it is really only restlessness.

Margaret McCord telephones. She is sorry she has not been in touch; she has been out of town. Can she take him to lunch, perhaps on Sunday? They could drive out to the Barossa Valley. Unfortunately, her husband will not be able to join them: he is overseas.

He would love to come, he replies, but, alas, he finds long car rides a bit of a calvary.

"Then shall I just drop by?" she says.

Years ago, after his divorce, he and Margaret had a brief fling. According to Margaret, whom he does not necessarily trust, her husband knows nothing of those intimacies.

"Why not?" he says. "Come on Sunday. Come to dinner. I have some excellent cannelloni that my house help has prepared."

They eat on the balcony, on a rather cool evening, amid the valedictory calls of birds, with citronella candles flickering on the table. There is a certain constraint: what once passed between them is by no means forgotten.

He tells Margaret about his time under the rule of Sheena; he tells her about Mrs. Putts the social worker, who prepared him for the afterlife in all respects save sex, a topic that she perhaps thought inappropriate to a man of his age.

"And is it inappropriate?" Margaret asks. "Candidly?"

Candidly, he replies, he cannot yet tell. He is not incapacitated, if that is what she is asking. His spine is unharmed, as are the relevant nerve connections. The as yet unanswered question is whether he would be able to perform the motions required of the active member in a sexual couple. A second and related question is whether embarrassment and shame might not outweigh pleasure.

"I would have thought," Margaret says, "that given the circumstances you might be excused from playing the role of active member. And why should you be embarrassed? It's not as though you have leprosy. You are just an amputee. Amputees can be rather romantic. Think of all those war films: men coming home from the front with eye patches or empty sleeves pinned across their chests or on crutches. Women swooned over them."

"Just an amputee," he says.

"Yes. You were the victim of an accident, a crash. After which you had a leg amputated. Part of a leg. Part of a stupid body part. That's all. You still have your health. You are still yourself. You are the same handsome, healthy man you always were." She gives him a smile.

They could test it out in the bedroom right now, the two of them, test whether he is the same man he always was, test whether, even with a body part missing, pleasure can outweigh its opposite. Margaret would not be averse, he is sure of that. But the moment passes and they do not grasp it, for which, looking back later, he is thankful. He does not care to become the object of any woman's sexual charity, however good-natured. Nor does he care to expose to the gaze of an outsider, even if she is a friend from the old days, even if she does claim to find amputees romantic, this unlovely new body of his. If he ever goes to bed with a woman again, he will make sure it is in the dark.

"I have had a visitor," he tells Marijana the next day.

"Yes?" Marijana says.

"There may be other visitors," he plunges on grimly. "I mean women."

"To live with you?" Marijana says.

To live with him? The thought has never crossed his mind. "Of course not," he says. "Just friends, women friends."

"That's good," she says, and switches on the vacuum cleaner.

Marijana, it would appear, could not care less whether he has women in the flat. What he gets up to in his own time is none of her business. And what could he get up to, anyway?

Unlike Margaret, Marijana has never seen him as he used to be. To her he is simply her latest client, a pale-skinned, slack-thewed old man on crutches.

On the job Marijana wears not a nurse's cap but a head scarf, like any good Balkan housewife. He approves of the scarf, as he approves of any token that she has not wholly cast off the Old World in favor of the new.

Aside from assorted war criminals and the tall tennis player with the big serve whose name escapes him (Ilja? Ilić? Roman Ilić?), Croats are an unknown quantity to him. He must have crossed paths with dozens of Yugoslavs in the days when there were still Yugoslavs, but of course it never occurred to him to ask what variety of Yugoslav they were.

Where does Marijana fit into the Yugoslav picture, Marijana and the husband who assembles cars? What were they fleeing when they left the Old Country? Or was it simply the case that, growing sick and tired of strife, they packed their goods and crossed the border in quest of a better, more peaceable life?

Marijana is telling him about her son, whose name is Drago. For his sixteenth birthday, her husband bought Drago a motorcycle. A big mistake, in Marijana's opinion. Now Drago stays out every evening, neglecting his homework, missing meals. He and his friends hang out on the back roads, racing each other, practicing skids and God knows what else. She is afraid he is going to break a limb, or worse.

"Your son is a young man," he tells Marijana. "He is testing himself. You cannot stop young men from exploring their limits. They want to be the fastest. They want to be the strongest. They want to be admired."

He has never met Drago, probably never will. But he enjoys Marijana's performance, enjoys its transparency: too well mannered to boast about her boy, she complains instead about his unruliness, his recklessness, his joie de vivre, about how he will be her ruin.

"If you want to give Drago a fright," he suggests, not entirely seriously, "bring him here one day. I'll show him my leg."

"You think he will listen, Mr. Rayment? He will say is nothing, is just bicycle accident."

"I'll show him what's left of the bicycle, too."

He still has the bicycle in the storeroom downstairs, the back wheel folded in two, the stays jammed into the spokes. No one bothered to steal it, after all, that day on Magill Road, though it lay by the roadside till evening. Then the police took it in. They rescued the plastic box that had been strapped to the carrier, too, along with a fraction of the morning's purchases: a can of chickpeas with a dent in it, a quarter kilo of Brie that had melted in the sun and then congealed. He has kept the can as a memento, a memento mori. It is on a shelf in the kitchen. He will show Drago the can, he tells Marijana. Imagine if that was your skull, he will say to him. And then: Spare a thought for your mum. She worries about you. She wishes you to have a long and happy life.

The next day Marijana brings a photograph: Drago standing beside the motorcycle in question, wearing boots and tight jeans, in the crook of his arm a helmet emblazoned with a lightning bolt. He is tall and husky for a sixteen-year-old, with a winning smile. A dreamboat, as girls used to say in the old days. No doubt he will break many hearts.

"What are your son's plans?" he asks.

"He wants to go to Defense Force Academy. He wants to join Navy. He can get bursary for that."

Now she has a question for him, one that has been surprisingly long in coming. "You have no children, Mr. Rayment?"

"No, alas not. We did not get around to it, my wife and I. We had other things on our minds. And then, before we knew it, we were divorced."

"And you never worry about it after?"

"On the contrary, I worried about it more and more, particularly as I grew older."

"And your wife? She worry about it?"

"My wife remarried. She married a divorcé with children of his own. They had a child together and became one of those complicated modern families where everyone calls everyone else by the first name. So, no, my wife does not worry about our childlessness, my childlessness. My ex-wife. I do not have much contact with her."

It is all within bounds, what is passing between them, within the bounds of the impersonal personal. A conversation between a man and a woman, a woman who happens to be the man's nurse, getting to know each other better in a country where all persons are equal, and all faiths. Marijana is a Catholic. He is no longer anything. But in this country one is as good as the other, Catholicism and nothing. Marijana may disapprove of people who marry and unmarry and never get around to having children, but she knows enough to keep her disapproval to herself.

"So who is going to take care of you?"

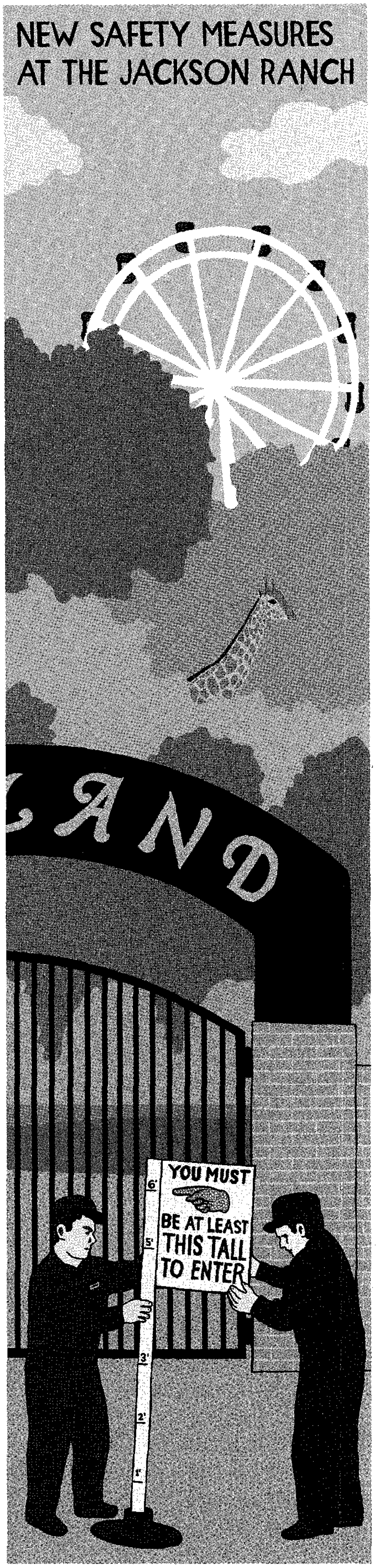
An odd question to ask. The obvious answer is, You are: you are going to take care of me, for the immediate future, you or whoever else I employ for that purpose. But, presumably, there is a more charitable way of interpreting the question. Who is going to be your stay and support?, for instance.

"Oh, I'll take care of myself," he replies. "I do not expect a lengthy old age."

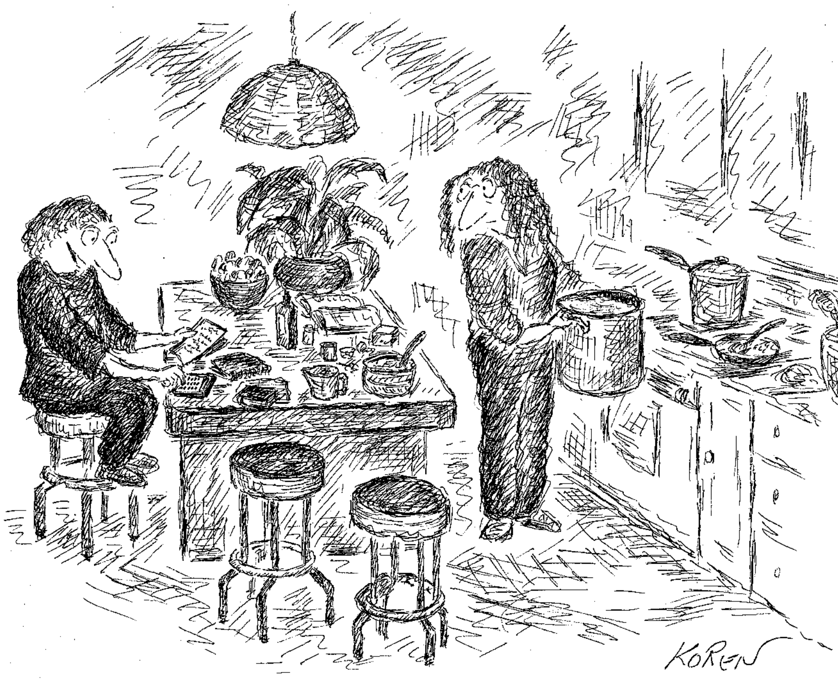
They leave it at that, he and Mari-

NEVERAGAINLAND

NEW SAFETY MEASURES AT THE JACKSON RANCH



MICHAEL KUPPERMAN/BEN GREENMAN



"Mom—listen to how much atmospheric pollution we produce just going to my soccer games."

• •

jana, their exchange of particulars. But her question echoes in his mind. *Who is going to take care of you*? The more he stares at the words "take care of," the more inscrutable they seem. He remembers a dog they had when he was a child in Lourdes, lying in its basket in the last stages of canine distemper, whimpering without cease, its muzzle hot and dry, its limbs jerking. "*Bon, je m'en occupe*," his father said at a certain point, and picked the dog up, basket and all, and walked out of the house. Five minutes later, from the woods, he heard the flat report of a shotgun, and that was that; he never saw the dog again. *Je m'en occupe:* I'll take charge of it; I'll take care of it; I'll do what has to be done. That kind of caring, with a shotgun, was certainly not what Marijana had in mind.

He has many regrets. He is full of regrets. They come back nightly like roosting birds. Chief among them is regret that he does not have a son. It would be nice to have a daughter—girls have an appeal of their own—but the son he does not have is the one he truly misses. If he and Henriette had had a son right away, while they still loved each other, or were enamored of each other, or cared for each other, that son would be thirty years old by now, a man in his own right. Unimaginable, perhaps, but the unimaginable is there to be imagined.

It is not beyond the bounds of the possible to acquire a son, even at this late juncture. He could, for instance, locate (but how?) some wayward orphan and put in an offer to adopt him and hope to be accepted; though the chances that the welfare system, as represented by Mrs. Putts, would ever consign a child to the care of a maimed and solitary old man are zero, less than zero. Or he could locate (but how?) some fertile young woman and marry her or pay her or otherwise induce her to permit him to engender, or try to engender, a male child in her womb.

But it is not a baby he wants. What he wants is a son, a proper son, a son and heir—a younger, stronger, better version of himself.

His willy. If you want me to wash your willy, Sheena said in her private time with him, you will have to ask. Does he have it in his willy, in his exhausted loins, to father a child? Does he have the seed, and enough animal passion to drive that seed to the right place? The record would not seem to indicate so. The record would seem to indicate that passionate outpourings are not part of his nature. A pleasant affectionateness, a mild, if gratifying, sensuality—that is what Margaret McCord will recall about him, she and half a dozen other women, not including his wife. As a lover rather *doggy*, in fact: not a word he is fond of but an apt one. A nice man to cuddle up to on a chilly evening; the kind of male friend you rather absent-mindedly go to bed with, then wonder later whether it really happened.

All in all, not a man of passion. He is not sure that he has ever liked passion, or approved of it. Passion: foreign territory; a comical but unavoidable affliction, like mumps, that one hopes to undergo while still young, in one of its milder, less ruinous varieties, so as not to catch it more seriously later on. Dogs in the grip of passion coupling, hapless grins on their faces, their tongues hanging out.

"You want I dust your books?" Eleven in the morning, and Marijana would seem to have run out of tasks.

"All right, if you like. You can run the vacuum cleaner over them with that nozzle attachment."

She shakes her head. "No, I clean them good. You are book saver, don't want dust on books. You are book saver, yes?"

"A book collector, that's what we say here. Just those three shelves, from there to there, are a collection, properly speaking. Those are my books on photography. The rest are just common or garden books. No, if I have saved anything it has been photographs, not books. I keep them in those cabinets. Would you like to see?"

In two old-fashioned cedarwood cabinets he has hundreds of photographs and postcards of life in the early mining camps of Victoria and New South Wales. There is a handful from South Australia, too. Since the field is not a popular or even a properly defined one, his collection may be the best in the country, perhaps in the world.

For her eyes he takes out the group photographs that are the core of his collection. For the photographer's visit, some of the miners have put on their Sunday best. Others are content with a clean shirt, the sleeves rolled high to show off their brawny arms, and perhaps a clean neckerchief. They confront the camera with the look of grave confidence that came naturally to men in Victoria's day but seems now to have vanished from the face of the earth.

"So this is what you do," Marijana says. "Is good, is good. Is good you save history. So people don't think Australia is country without history, just bush and then mob of immigrants. Like me. Like us." She has taken off the head scarf: she shakes her hair free, smoothes it back, gives him a smile.

Like us. Who are these *us*? Marijana and the Jokić family, or Marijana and he?

"It was not just bush, Marijana," he says cautiously.

"No, of course is not bush, is Aboriginal people. But I talk about Europe, what they say in Europe. Bush, then Captain Cook, then immigrants—where is history, they say?"

"You mean, where are the castles and cathedrals? Don't immigrants have a history of their own? Do you cease to have a history when you move from one point on the globe to another?"

She brushes aside the rebuke, if that is what it is. "In Europe people say Australia have no history because in Australia everybody is new. Don't mind if you come with this history or that history, in Australia you start zero. Zero history, you understand? So is good somebody save old photographs, show Australia has history, too. But they worth lots of money, these photographs, eh?"

"Yes, they are worth money."

"So who gets them, you know, after you?"

"After my decease, do you mean? They are going to the State Library. It is all arranged. The State Library here in Adelaide."

"You don't sell them?"

"No, I won't sell them. It will be a bequest."

"But they put your name on, eh?"

"They will put my name on the collection indeed. The Rayment Bequest. So that in future days children will whisper to each other, 'Who was he, Rayment of the Rayment Bequest? Was he someone famous?' "

"But photograph, too, maybe, eh, not just name? Photograph of Mr. Rayment. Photograph is not the same as just name, is more living. Otherwise, why save photographs?"

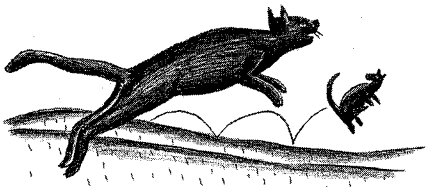
No doubt about it, she has a point. "I'll ask the people at the library," he says. "I'll see how they feel about the idea. But not a picture of me as I am now, God spare us that. As I used to be."

The dusting of the books, a chore that cleaning women in the past disposed of by running a feather duster over the spines, is attacked by Marijana as a major operation. Desk and cabinets are covered with newspaper; then, half a shelf at a time, the books are carried out to the balcony and individually dusted, and the emptied shelves wiped immaculately clean. Where does the woman get the energy?

It is on the day of the book-dusting that what had been a mild interest in Marijana, an interest that had not amounted to more than curiosity, turns into something else. In her he begins to see if not beauty, then at least the perfection of a certain feminine type. Strong as a horse, he thinks, eying the sturdy calves and well-knit haunches that ripple as she reaches for the upper shelves. Strong as a mare.

Has whatever it is that had been floating in the air these past weeks begun to settle, *faute de mieux*, on Marijana? And what is its name, this sediment, this sentiment? It does not feel like desire. If he had to pick a word for it, he would say it was admiration. Can desire grow out of admiration, or are the two quite distinct species? What would it be like to lie side by side, naked, breast to breast, with a woman one principally admires?

Not just a woman, a married woman, too—he must not forget that. Not far away there lives and breathes a Mr. Marijana Jokić. Would Mr. Jokić or Pan Jokić or Gospodin Jokić or whatever he calls himself fly into a rage if he found out that his wife's employer indulged in daytime reveries about lying breast to breast with her—fly into one of those elemental Balkan rages that give birth to clan feuds and epic poems? Would Mr. Jokić come after him with a knife?



He makes jokes about Jokić because he envies him. When the chips are down, Jokić has this admirable woman and he does not.

One o'clock and Marijana has not finished with the books. Ljuba, usually a good child—if it is still permitted to divide children into the good and the bad—is beginning to whine.

"Leave the cleaning. Finish it off tomorrow," he tells Marijana.

"I am finished in flesh of lightning," she replies. "Maybe you give her something to eat."

"Flash. A flash of lightning. Flesh is what we are made of, flesh and bone."

She does not reply. Sometimes he thinks she does not bother to listen to him.

He should give Ljuba something to eat, but what? What do small children eat besides popcorn and cookies and toasted cereal flakes encrusted with sugar, none of which he has in his pantry?

He tries stirring a spoonful of plum jam into a pot of yogurt. Ljuba accepts it, seems to like it.

She sits at the kitchen table, while he stands by her leaning on Zimmer's invention. "Your mum is a great help to me," he says. "I don't know what I would do without her."

"Is it true you've got a artificial leg?" She produces the long word casually, as though she used it every day.

"No, it's the same leg I always had, just a bit shorter."

"Do you got a screw in your leg?"

"A screw? No, no screws. My leg is all natural. It has a bone inside, just like your legs and your mommy's legs."

"Doesn't it got a screw, to screw on your artificial leg?"

"No, not as far as I know. Because I have no artificial leg. Why do you ask?"

"Because." And she will say no more.

A screw in his leg. Perhaps in the past Marijana nursed a man with screws in his leg, screws and bolts and pins and struts and braces, all made of gold or titanium—a man with a reconstructed leg of the kind that was not awarded to him because he was too old for it, not worth the trouble or the expense. Perhaps that is the explanation.

As a child, he remembers, he was told the story of a woman who in a moment of absent-mindedness stuck a tiny sewing needle into the palm of her hand.

Unnoticed, the needle climbed up the woman's veins and in the fullness of time pierced her heart and killed her. The story was presented to him as a caution against treating needles carelessly, but in retrospect it reads more like a fairy tale. Can needles really enter the bloodstream? How could the woman in the story have been unaware of the tiny metallic weapon cruising up her arm toward her armpit, rounding the axillary curve, and heading south toward its helpless, thudding prey? Should he be retelling the story to Ljuba, passing on its cryptic wisdom, whatever that may be?

"No," he repeats, "I have no have screws in me."

But Ljuba has lost interest. With a smack of the lips, she finishes off the yogurt and draws the sleeve of her jumper across her mouth. He reaches for a tissue and wipes her lips, which she allows him to do. After that he wipes her sleeve clean, too.

It is the first time he has laid a finger on the child. For a moment her wrist lies limp in his hand. Perfect: no other word will do. They arrive from the womb with everything new, everything in perfect order. Even in the ones who arrive damaged, with funny limbs or a brain that sends out sparks, each cell is as fresh, as clean, as new as on creation day. Each new birth a new miracle.

Margaret pays a second visit, this time unannounced. It is a Sunday, and he is alone in the flat. He offers her tea, which she declines. She circles the room, comes up behind him where he sits, strokes his hair. He is as still as a stone.

"So is this the end of it, Paul?" she asks.

"The end of what?"

"You know what I mean. Have you decided this is the end of your sexual life? Tell me straight so that I will know how to conduct myself in future."

Not someone to beat about the bush, Margaret. He has always liked that about her. But how should he respond? Yes, I have come to the end of my sexual life—from now on treat me like a eunuch? How can he say that when it may not even be true? Yet what if it is indeed true? What if the snorting black steed of passion has given up the ghost? The twilight of his manhood. What a letdown, but what a relief, too!

"Margaret," he says, "give me time."

"And your day help?" Margaret says, going for the weak spot. "How are you and your day help getting on?"

"My day help and I get on well, thank you. But for her I might not bother to get out of bed in the mornings. But for her I might end up as one of those cases one reads about, where the neighbors notice a bad smell and call the police to break down the door."

"Don't be melodramatic, Paul. Nobody dies of an amputated leg."

"No, but people do die of indifference to the future."

"So your day help has saved your life. That's good. She deserves a medal. When am I going to meet her?"

"Don't take it personally, Margaret. You asked me a question, I am trying to give a truthful answer."

But Margaret does take it personally. "I'll be on my way now," she says. "Give me a call when you are ready for human society again."

Marijana collects all his trousers and takes them home with her. She brings them back two days later with the right legs neatly folded and sewn. "I don't cut them," she says. "Maybe you change your mind and wear, you know, *prosthese*. We see."

Prosthese: she pronounces it as if it were a German word. Thesis, antithesis, then prosthesis.

The surgical wound, which has given no trouble hitherto and which he thought had healed for good, starts to itch. Marijana dusts it with antibiotic powder and winds it in fresh bandages, but the itching continues. It is worst at night. He has to stay awake to keep himself from scratching. The wound feels to him like a great inflamed jewel glowing in the dark; both guard and prisoner, he is condemned to crouch over it, protecting it.

The itching abates, but Marijana continues to wash the stump with particular care, to powder it, tend to it. From the touch of her hand he learns all he needs to know: that Marijana does not find this wasted and increasingly flabby body distasteful; that she is prepared, if she can, and if he will permit it, to transmit to him through her fingertips a fair quantum of her own ruddy good health.

It is not a cure, it is not done with love, it is probably no more than orthodox nursing practice, but it is enough. What love there is is all on his side.

"Thank you," he says when their time is over, speaking with such feeling that she gives him a quizzical look.

"No worries," she replies.

One evening after Marijana has left he rings for a taxi, then embarks alone on the slow sideways descent of the stairs, holding tight to the bannister.

In the public library, he finds two books on Croatia: a guidebook to Illyria and the Dalmatian coast and a guidebook to Zagreb and its churches; also a number of books on the Yugoslav Federation and on the recent Balkan wars. On what he has come to enlighten himself about, however—the character of Croatia and its people—there is nothing.

He checks out a book called "Peoples of the Balkans." When the taxi returns, he is ready and waiting.

"Peoples of the Balkans: Between East and West," so runs the full title. Is that how the Jokićs felt back home: caught between Orthodox East and Catholic West? If so, how do they feel in Australia, where East and West have quite new meanings? The book has pages of black-and-white photographs. In one of them, a pair of peasant girls in head scarves conduct a donkey laden with firewood along a rocky mountain path. The younger girl smiles shyly at the camera, revealing a gap in her teeth. "Peoples of the Balkans" dates from 1962, before Marijana was even conceived. The pictures date from who knows when. The two girls could be grandmothers by now, they could be dead and buried. The donkey, too. Was this the world Marijana was born into?

One morning Marijana turns up in the company of a tall youth. It is the boy in the picture, unmistakably: Drago.

"My son come look at your bicycle," Marijana says. "He can fix it maybe."

"Yes. Of course." (But, he asks himself, whatever gave her the idea he wants the wreck of a bicycle fixed?) "Hello, Drago, good to meet you. Thanks for coming." He fishes out the key to the store from a mess of keys in a drawer and gives it to the boy. "See what you think. In my opinion, the bike is beyond help. The frame is bent. Ten to one the tubing is cracked. But have a look."

"O.K.," the boy says.

"I bring him to talk to you," Marijana says when they are alone. "Like you said."

Like he said? What could he have said? That he would give Drago a lesson in road safety?

The yarn that Marijana has spun for her son emerges only piece by piece: that Mr. Rayment has a bicycle that he wants fixed so that he can sell it, but, being not only crippled but maladroit, too, he cannot do the fixing himself.

Drago returns from his inspection and delivers his report. Whether the frame is cracked or not he cannot say offhand. He and his mates, one of whom has access to a machine shop, could probably bend it back into shape and respray it. But, even so, a new wheel and hub and derailleur and brakes would probably set him, Mr. Rayment, back as much as a good secondhand bike.

It is perfectly sensible advice. It is what he would have said himself.

"Thanks for looking at it, anyway," he says. "Your mother tells me you are into motorcycles."

"Yeah, my dad bought me a Yamaha, 250 cc."

"That's good." He casts Marijana a glance, which the boy pretends not to pick up. What more does she want him to say?

"Mum says you had a pretty bad accident," the boy offers.

"Yes. I was in hospital for a while."

"What happened?"

"I was hit by a car as I was turning."

"That's bad."

A silence. Is the boy absorbing the lesson he is supposed to be absorbing? Is Marijana getting what she wants? He suspects not. She wants him to be more voluble: to warn the boy how perilous the lot of cyclists is, and by analogy the lot of motorcyclists; to bring home to him the agonies of injury and the humiliations of the crippled state. But his sense of this youth is that he prefers laconism, that he will not take kindly to being preached to. And what sea change does Marijana want him to bring about, anyway? Does she really expect this handsome youth, bursting with good health, to spend his evenings at home curled up with a book while his mates are out having fun? To leave the gleaming new Yamaha in the garage and catch a bus? Drago Jokić: a name from folk epic. "The Ballad of Drago Jokić."

He clears his throat. "Drago, your mother has asked me to have a word with you in private."

Marijana leaves the room. He turns to the boy. "Look, I'm nothing to you, just the man your mother looks after and very grateful to her for that. But she asked me to speak to you and I agreed. What I want to tell you is, if I could turn back the clock to before my accident, believe me, I would. You may not think it, looking at me, but I used to lead an active life. Now I can't even go to the shops. And it happened in a split second, out of nowhere. Well, it could happen to you just as easily. Don't take risks with your life, son, it's not worth it. Your mother wants you to be careful on your bike. I think you should listen to her. That's all I'm going to say. Your mother is a good person, she loves you. Do you understand?"

If he had been asked to predict, he would have said that young Drago would sit through a lecture of this kind with his eyes cast down, picking at his cuticles, wishing the old geezer would get it over with. But it is not like that at all. Throughout his speech Drago regards him candidly, a faint, not unfriendly smile on his well-shaped lips. "O.K.," he says at the end. "Message received. I'll be careful." Then, after a pause: "You like my mum, don't you?"

He nods.

"She likes you, too."

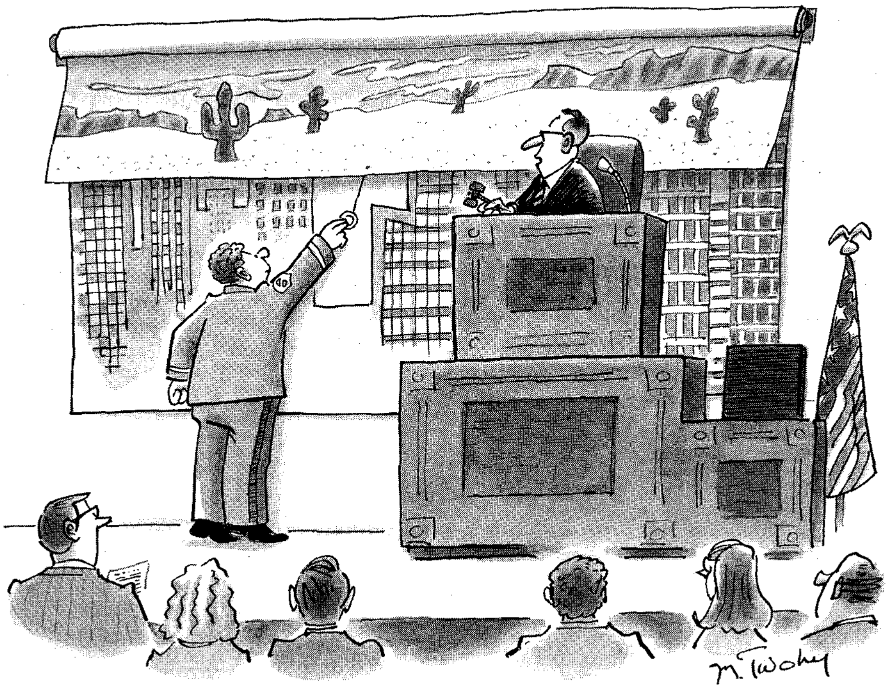
She likes him, too. His heart swells unreasonably. *I don't just like her, I love her!* Those are the words he is on the point of bursting out with. "I'm trying to be of assistance, that's all," he says instead. "That's why I've spoken to you. Not because I think I can save you by talking, since something like this"—he slaps the bad hip lightly, jocularly—"just happens, you can't foresee it, you can't prevent it. But it may help your mother to know that you know she loves you and wants you to be safe, wants it enough to ask a stranger to put in a word. O.K.?"

There are the words themselves, and then, behind or around or beneath the words, there is the intention. As he speaks he is aware of the boy watching his lips, brushing aside the word-strings as if they were cobwebs. His respect for the boy is growing, growing by leaps and bounds. No ordinary boy, this one! No wonder his mother is fearful.

Marijana returns, and Drago rises. "I'll be getting along now," he says. "Bye, Mum." From his lofty height he stoops and touches his lips to her forehead. "Bye, Mr. Rayment. Sorry about the bike." And he is gone.

"Very good tennis player," Marijana says. "Very good swimmer. Very good at everything. Very clever." She gives a wan smile.

"My dear Marijana," he says—heightened emotion, he tells himself, in a mo-



"The bailiff will change the venue."

"Don't bother waiting up tonight. I've got my wine-awareness group."

• •

ment of heightened emotion one can be forgiven for slipping in the odd term of endearment—"I am sure he will be all right. I am sure he will have a long and happy life and rise to be an admiral, if that is what he wants to be."

"You think so?" The smile has not left her lips, but now it speaks pure joy: despite the fact that he is useless with his hands and a cripple to boot, she believes he has the power to foretell the future. "That's good."

It is Marijana's smile, lingering in his memory, that brings about the longed-for, the long-needed change. At once all gloom is gone, all dark clouds. He is Marijana's employer, her boss, the one whose wishes she is paid to carry out, yet before she arrives each day he fusses around the apartment, doing his best to make things spick-and-span for her. He even has flowers delivered, to brighten the drabness.

The situation is absurd. What does he want of the woman? He wants her to smile again, certainly, to smile on him. He wants to win a place in her heart, however tiny. Does he want to become her lover, too? Yes, he does, in a sense, fervently. He wants to love and cherish her and her children, Drago and Ljuba and the third one, the one whom he has yet to clap eyes on. As for the husband, he has not the slightest malign intent toward him, he will swear to that. He wishes the husband all happiness and good fortune. Nevertheless, he will give anything to be father to these excellent, beautiful children and a husband to Marijana—co-father if need be, co-husband if need be, platonic if need be. He wants to take care of them, all of them, to protect them and save them. Drago, above all, he wants to save. Between Drago and the lightning bolt of the envious gods he is ready to interpose himself, bare his own breast.

"How is Drago getting on?" he asks Marijana as casually as he can.

She shrugs despondently. "This weekend he will go with his friends to Tunkalooloo beach. You say it like that—Tunkalooloo?"

"Tunkalilla."

"They go by bike. Wild friends, wild boys. I'm frighted. Is like gang. Girls, too, you can't believe it, so young. I'm glad you speak to him last week. Spoke."

"It was nothing. Just a few fatherly words."

"Yes, he don't get enough fatherly words, like you say, that's his problem."

It is the first criticism she has voiced of the absent husband. He waits for more, but there is no more.

"This is not an easy country for a boy to grow up in," he replies cautiously. "A climate of manliness prevails. A lot of pressure on a boy to excel in manly deeds, manly sports. Be a daredevil. Take risks. It is probably different back where you come from."

Back where you come from. Now that he hears them, the words sound condescending. Why should boys not also be boys where the Jokićs come from? What does he know about the forms that manliness takes in southeastern Europe? He waits for Marijana to set him right. But her mind is elsewhere.

"What you think of boarding school, Mr. Rayment?"

"What do I think of boarding school? I think it can be very expensive. I also think it is a mistake to believe that in boarding schools young people are watched over night and day to make sure they come to no harm. But you can get a good education at a boarding school, no doubt about that, or at the better boarding schools. Is that what you are thinking of for Drago? Have you checked into the fees? You should do that first. The fees can be high, absurdly high.

"But if you are serious about it," he plunges on, and even as he speaks he feels the recklessness of what he is saying, but he cannot stop himself, will not stop himself, "and if Drago himself really wants to go, I could help financially. We could treat it as a loan."

There is a moment's silence. So, he thinks, it is out. No going back.

"We are thinking, maybe he can get scholarship, with his tennis and all that," says Marijana, who has perhaps not absorbed his words and what must lie behind them.

"Yes, a scholarship is certainly a possibility. You can investigate that."

"Or we can get loan." Now the echo of his words seems to reach her, and her brow furrows. "You can loan us money, Mr. Rayment?"

"I can make you a loan. Interest-free. You can pay it back when Drago is earning."

"Why?"

"It is an investment in his future. In the future of all of us."

She shakes her head. "Why?" she repeats. "I don't understand."

It is one of the days when she has brought Ljuba with her. In her scarlet pinafore, with her legs, one in a scarlet stocking, one in a purple, stretched out on the sofa, her arms slack at her sides, the child could be mistaken for a doll, were it not for the searching black eyes.

"Surely you must know, Marijana," he whispers. His mouth is dry, his heart is thudding, it is as awful and as thrilling as when he was sixteen. "Surely a woman always knows."

Again she shakes her head. She seems genuinely puzzled. "Don't understand."

"I will tell you in private."

She murmurs to the child. Obediently, Ljuba picks up her little pink backpack and trots off to the kitchen.

"There," Marijana says. "Now say."

"I love you. That is all. I love you and I want to give you something. Let me."

A silence falls, and Marijana does nothing to help. But at least she does not turn on her heel.

What he ought to do, of course, is embrace the woman. Breast to breast she could not mistake him. But to embrace her he must put aside the absurd crutches that allow him to stand up, and once he does that he will totter, perhaps fall.

Marijana waves a hand as if she were wiping a windowpane or flapping a dishcloth. "You want to pay so Drago can go to boarding school?" she says, and the spell is broken.

Is that what he wants: to pay for Drago's schooling? Yes. He wants Drago to have a good education. He wants Ljuba and her elder sister to grow up happy, too. Over the whole brood he wants to extend the shield of his benevolent protection. And he wants to love this excellent woman, their mother. That above all. For which he will pay anything.

"Yes," he says. "That is what I am offering."

She meets his gaze squarely. Though he cannot swear to it, he believes she is blushing. Then, swiftly, she leaves the room. A moment later she is back. The red kerchief is gone, her hair is shaken free. On one arm she has Ljuba, on the other the pink satchel. She is murmuring into the child's ear. The child, thumb in mouth, turns and inspects him curiously.

"We must go," Marijana says. "Thank you." And in a whisk they are gone.

He has done it. He, an old man with knobbly fingers, has confessed his love. But dare he even for a moment hope that this woman, in whom he has without forethought, without hesitation sunk all his hopes, will love him back?

The next day Marijana does not arrive. Nor does she come on Friday. On Saturday, the telephone rings. "Mr. Rayment? This is Marijana. How are you? Sorry I missed my days. I was crook. I come tomorrow, O.K.?"

So that is to be the fiction between them: she was crook. "Yes, of course it is O.K., Marijana. I hope you are feeling better. I will see you as usual tomorrow."

Why Marijana has decided to come back emerges as soon as she steps through the front door. Before even taking off her coat—it is raining, a warm, steamy rain that carries a tang of eucalyptus—she slaps down on the table a glossy brochure. On the cover, mock-Gothic buildings against acres of greensward; in a panel, a well-scrubbed boy in shirtsleeves and tie at a computer keyboard, with an equally well-scrubbed chum peering over his shoulder. "Wellington College: Five Decades of Excellence." He has never heard of Wellington College.

"Drago say he will go here," Marijana says. "Look like good school, don't you think?"

He pages through the brochure. " 'Sister institution to Wellington College in Pembrokeshire,' " he reads aloud. " 'Preparing young men for the challenges of a new century. . . . Careers in business, science and technology, the armed forces.' Where is this place? How did you find out about it?"

"Drago know all about it. Is food school for Defense Force Academy."

"Feeder school."

"Feeder school. They get, you know, preference."

He returns to the brochure. Application form. Schedule of fees. He knew that boarding-school fees were high; nevertheless, in black-and-white the figures give him a jolt.

"How many years would he be there?"

"If he start January, two years. In two years he can get year twelve, then he can get bursary. Is just fee for two years he need."

"And Drago is enthusiastic about the school? He has agreed to go?"

"Very enthusiastic. He want to go."

"It's normal, you know, for the parents to take a look at a school first before committing themselves. Make a tour of the premises, speak to the headmaster, get a feel of the place. Are you sure you and your husband and Drago don't want to pay a visit to Wellington College first?"

Marijana takes off the raincoat—it is made of some clear plastic material, purely functional—and drapes it over a chair. Her skin is warm, ruddy. No trace of the tension of their last encounter.

"Wellington College," she says. "You think Wellington College wants that Mr. and Mrs. Jokić from Munno Para come visit, see if maybe Wellington College is O.K. for their boy?"

Her tone is good-natured enough. If anyone is embarrassed, it is he.

"In Croatia, you know, Mr. Rayment, my husband was respected man. He fix old clocks, he fix old toys, all things clockwork he fix perfect. Specialist technician in antique mechanisms is how you call it. But here"—she casts her eyes up to the heavens—"who cares? In Australia is no antique mechanisms. So Miroslav Jokić just autoworker. Is nothing, autoworker."

"I am not sure I agree," he says. "An autoworker is not nothing. Nobody is nothing. Anyhow, whether you are from Munno Para or Timbuktu, my guess is that Wellington College will be only too glad to take your money. Go ahead and apply. I'll pay. I'll give you a check right now for the application fee."

So there it is. As easy as that. He is committed. He has become a godfather.

The godfather: the man who stands beside the father at the baptismal font, giving his blessing to the new soul and pledging his lifelong support. As the priest in the ritual plays the part of the Son and intercessor, and the father is, of course, the Father, so the godfather stands for the Holy Spirit. At least, that is how he conceives of it. A figure without substance, ghostly, beyond anger and desire.

"Is good," Marijana says. "I tell Drago. You make him very happy." A pause. "And you? Leg is O.K.? No pain? You do your exercises?"

"The leg is O.K.," he says. "No pain, no pain at all." ◆

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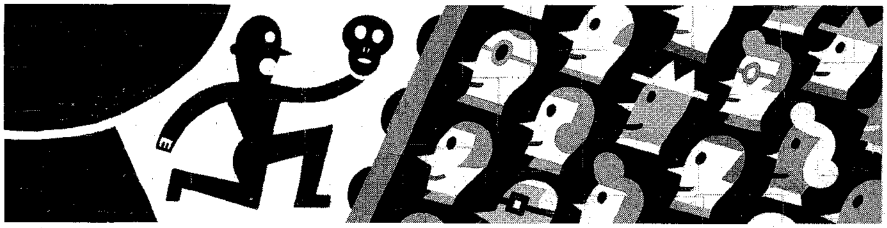


BOOKS

FAT MAN

Herman Kahn and the nuclear age.

BY LOUIS MENAND

Herman Kahn was the heavyweight of the Megadeath Intellectuals, the men who, in the early years of the Cold War, made it their business to think about the unthinkable, and to design the game plan for nuclear war—how to prevent it, or, if it could not be prevented, how to win it, or, if it could not be won, how to survive it. The collective combat experience of these men was close to nil; their diplomatic experience was smaller. Their training was in physics, engineering, political science, mathematics, and logic, and they worked with the latest in assessment technologies: operational research, computer science, systems analysis, and game theory. The type of war they contemplated was, of course, never waged, but whether this was because of their work or in spite of it has always been a matter of dispute. Exhibit A in the case against them is a book by Kahn, published in 1960, "On Thermonuclear War."

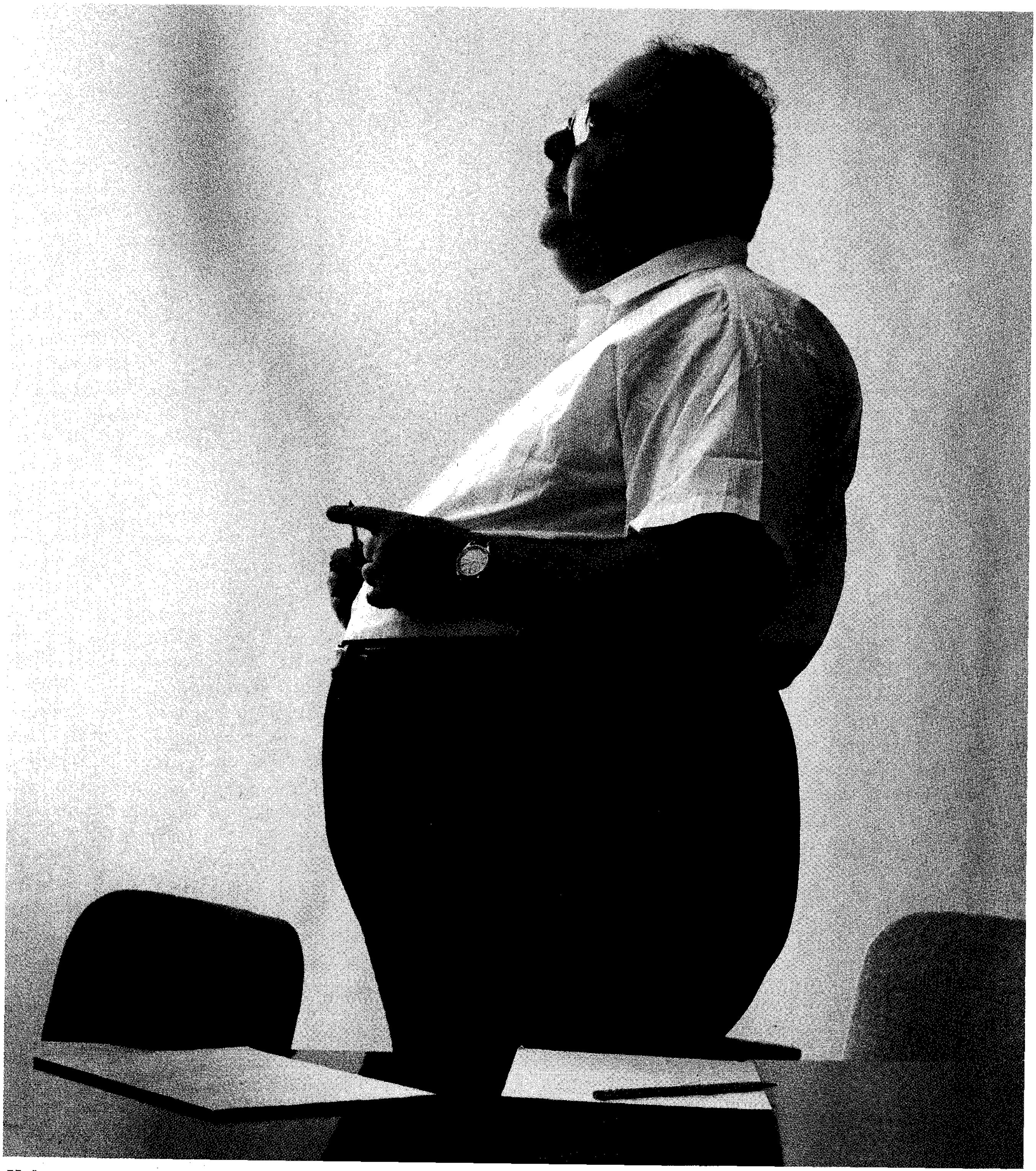
Kahn was a creature of the RAND Corporation, and RAND was a creature of the Air Force. In 1945, when the United States dropped atomic bombs nicknamed Little Boy and Fat Man on Japan, the Air Force was still a branch of the Army. The bomb changed that. An independent Department of the Air Force was created in 1947; the nation's nuclear arsenal was put under its command; and the Air Force displaced the Army as the prima donna of national defense. Whatever it wanted, it mostly got. One of the things it wanted was a research arm, and RAND was the result. (RAND stands for Research ANd Development.) RAND was a line item in the Air Force budget; its offices were on a beach in Santa Monica. Kahn joined in 1947.

In his day, Kahn was the subject of many magazine stories, and most of them found it important to mention his girth—he was built, one journalist recorded, "like a prize-winning pear"—and his volubility. He was a marathon spielmeister, whose preferred format was the twelve-hour lecture, split into three parts over two days, with no text but with plenty of charts and slides. He was a jocular, gregarious giant who chattered on about fallout shelters, megaton bombs, and the incineration of millions. Observers were charmed or repelled, sometimes charmed and repelled. Reporters referred to him as "a roly-poly, second-strike Santa Claus" and "a thermonuclear Zero Mostel." He is supposed to have had the highest I.Q. on record.

Sharon Ghamari-Tabrizi's "The Worlds of Herman Kahn" (Harvard; $26.95) is an attempt to look at Kahn as a cultural phenomenon. (Kahn is the subject of a full-length biography with a similar title, "Supergenius: The Mega-Worlds of Herman Kahn," by a former colleague, Barry Bruce-Briggs, which, though partisan, is thorough and informed, and which Ghamari-Tabrizi, strangely, never mentions.) She is not the first to treat Kahn as more an artist than a scientist. In 1968, when Kahn was at the height of his celebrity, Richard Kostelanetz wrote a profile of him for the *Times Magazine* in which he suggested that Kahn had "a thoroughly avant-garde sensibility." He meant that Kahn was uninhibited by conventional ways of thinking, alert to abandon positions that were starting to seem obsolete, continually trying to find new ways to see around the next corner. As Ghamari-Tabrizi points out, this was the mode of RAND itself. The atmosphere there was one part Southern California nonconformity and two parts University of Chicago rigor. People at RAND imagined themselves to be well out on the curve. They read widely and held salons, where they talked futurology; some had arty décor in their offices and took up gourmet cooking. They were eggheads in a world of meatheads, and they regarded the uniformed military man in the same way that the baseball statistician Bill James regards Don Zimmer: as a relic of the pre-scientific dark ages, when the wisdom of experience passed for strategic thought. The wisdom of experience was useless in the atomic era, because no one had ever participated in a nuclear exchange. The variables of nuclear strategy were too complex to be pondered without the aid of advanced quantitative methods and a high-speed computer. One of the earliest of the atomic-age defense intellectuals, Bernard Brodie, had made his reputation with a book called "A Guide to Naval Strategy," published in 1942. When he wrote it, Brodie had not only never been on a ship; he had never seen an ocean. He carried this spirit into his work on the bomb.

Ghamari-Tabrizi thinks that if nuclear strategy is a science it is, at best, an "intuitive science," more imaginative than empirical, and she relies a lot on the vocabulary of literary criticism to interpret it: the grotesque, the fantastic, the uncanny, the hardboiled, "the aesthetic of spontaneity," "serious play." She does not withhold judgment about the merits of Kahn's work, but she is interested mainly in the feel of the moment, the moods and tastes of a time when the Cold War, and the anxious talk that swirled around it, had many Americans scared almost to death. It is an adventurous approach, and rewarding when it works. That it does not always work was implicit in the gambit.

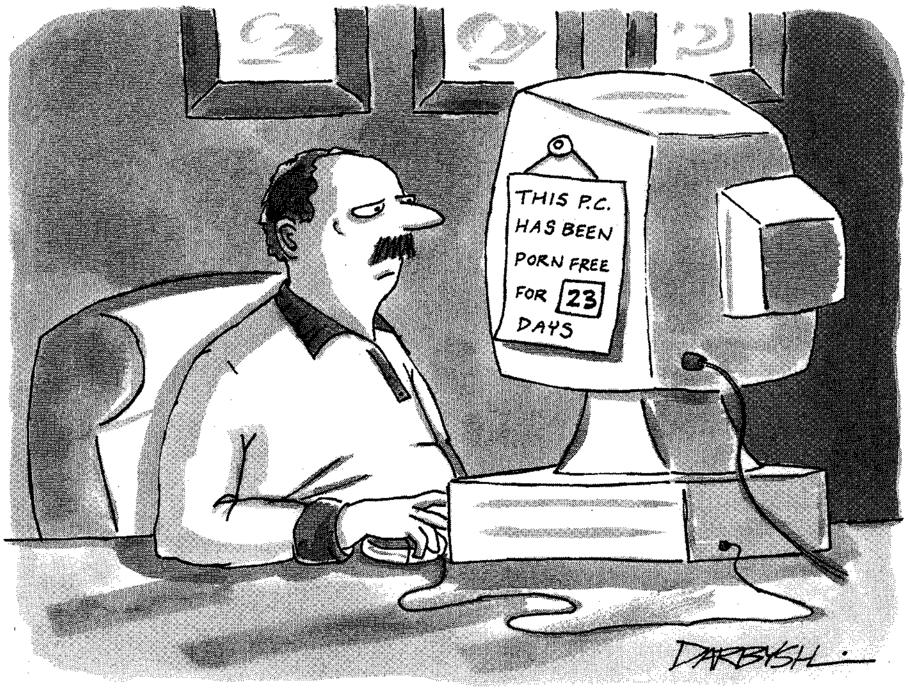
Kahn was born in Bayonne, New Jersey, in 1922, and grew up in the Bronx and, after his parents divorced, in Los Angeles. He went to U.C.L.A. and majored in physics. During the war, he served in the Pacific theatre in a noncombat position, then finished his B.S.



Kahn was once called "a thermonuclear Zero Mostel." He is supposed to have had the highest I.Q. on record.

and entered a Ph.D. program at Cal Tech. He failed to graduate—family financial problems interfered—and, after a half-hearted attempt to enter the real-estate business, went to work at RAND. He became involved in the development of the hydrogen bomb, and commuted to the Livermore Laboratory, near Berkeley, where he worked with Edward Teller, John von Neumann, and Hans Bethe. He also entered the circle of Albert Wohlstetter, a mathematician who had produced an influential critique of nuclear preparedness, and who was the most mandarin of the RAND intellectuals. And he became obsessed with the riddles of deterrence.

The defense policy of the Eisenhower Administration, announced by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in an address to the Council on Foreign Relations in 1954, was the doctrine of "massive retaliation." Dulles explained that the United States could not afford to be prepared to meet Soviet aggression piecemeal—to have soldiers ready to fight in every place threatened by Communist expansion. The Soviets had a bigger army, and they threatened in too many places. The solution was to make it clear that the American response to Soviet aggression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anywhere would be a nuclear attack, at a time and place of America's choosing. It was a first-strike policy: if provoked, the United States would be the first to use the bomb. An overwhelming nuclear arsenal therefore acted as a deterrent on Soviet aggression. Eisenhower called the policy the New Look.

The New Look was good for the Air Force, because it made the nuclear arsenal, and its delivery system of bombers and, later on, missiles, the country's principal strategic resource. But the analysts at RAND considered massive retaliation a pathetically crude idea, an atomic-age version of Roosevelt's big stick. They thought that it was practically an invitation to the Soviets to precede any local aggression by a preëmptive first strike on American bomber bases, eliminating the nuclear threat on the ground and forcing the United States into the land war it was unprepared to fight. There was also a major credibility problem. How aggressive did the Soviets need to be to trigger a thermonuclear response? Was the United States willing to kill millions of Russians, and to put millions of Americans at risk of dying in a counterattack, in order to prevent, say, South Korea from going Communist? Or West Berlin? There had to be some options available between disapproval and annihilation. The doctrine of massive retaliation was a deterrent—a way to prevent war—but it was inherently destabilizing. National defense policy required something more nuanced, and figuring out what, since Eisenhower was uninterested, fell to the people at RAND.

Kahn began working on the problem not long after Dulles's speech. In 1959, he spent a semester at the Center for International Studies, at Princeton, and then toured the country delivering lectures on deterrence theory. In 1960, Princeton University Press published a version of the lectures (with much added material) as "On Thermonuclear War." Kahn was not really a writer, and his book—six hundred and fifty-one pages—is shaggy, overstuffed, almost free-associational, with a colorful use of capitalization and italics, long excurses on the strategic lessons of the First and Second World Wars, and the sorts of proto-PowerPoint charts and tables that Kahn used in his lectures.

"On Thermonuclear War" (Bruce-Briggs suggests that the title, an allusion to Clausewitz's "On War," was devised by the publisher) is based on two assertions. The first is that nuclear war is possible; the second is that it is winnable. Most of the book is a consideration, in the light of these assumptions, of possible nuclear-war scenarios. In some, hundreds of millions die, and portions of the planet are uninhabitable for millennia. In others, a few major cities are annihilated and only ten or twenty million people are killed. Just because both outcomes would be bad on a scale unknown in the history of warfare does not mean, Kahn insists, that one is not less bad than the other. "A thermonuclear war is quite likely to be an *unprecedented catastrophe* for the defender," as he puts it. "But an 'unprecedented' catastrophe can be a far cry from an 'unlimited' one." The opening chapter contains a table titled "Tragic but Distinguishable Postwar States." It has two columns: one showing the number of dead, from two million up to a hundred and sixty million, the other showing the time required for economic recuperation, from one year up to a hundred years. At the bottom of the table, there is a question: "Will the survivors envy the dead?"

Kahn believed—and this belief is foundational for every argument in his book—that the answer is no. He explains that "*despite a widespread belief to the contrary, objective studies indicate that even though the amount of human tragedy would be greatly increased in the postwar world, the increase would not preclude normal and happy lives for the majority of survivors and their descendants.*" For many readers, this has seemed pathologically insensitive. But these readers are missing Kahn's point. His point is that unless Americans really do believe that nuclear war is survivable, and survivable under conditions that, although hardly desirable, are acceptable and manageable, then deterrence has no meaning. You can't advertise your readiness to initiate a nuclear exchange if you are unwilling to accept the consequences. If the enemy believes that you will not tolerate the deaths of, say, twenty million of your own citizens, then he has called your bluff. It's the difference between saying, "You get one scratch on that car and I'll kill you," and saying, "You get one scratch on that car and you're grounded for a week." "Massive retaliation" sounds tough, but unless a President can bring himself to pull the nuclear trigger, it's just talk.

In "On Thermonuclear War," Kahn argues that deterrence is not insured by the policy of massive retaliation, which he calls the theory of the "Splendid" First Strike. Deterrence is insured by a credible second-strike capability—by what the United States can do *after* a Soviet nuclear attack. He writes, "*At the minimum, an adequate deterrent for the United States must provide an objective basis for a Soviet calcu-*

lation that would persuade them that, no matter how skillful or ingenious they were, an attack on the United States would lead to a very high risk if not certainty of large-scale destruction to Soviet civil society and military forces." He also argues for the development of a Limited War Capability—that is, the ability to counter Soviet aggression with conventional forces. That capability, too, is a deterrent, since it solves the "Scratch that car and I'll kill you" problem. Again, the threat of apocalypse is not proof against a minor infraction.

The most infamous pages in "On Thermonuclear War" concern survivability. What makes nuclear war different, Kahn points out, is not the number of dead; it's a new element—the problem of the postwar environment. In Kahn's view, the dangers of radioactivity are exaggerated. Fallout will make life less pleasant and cause inconvenience, but there is plenty of unpleasantness and inconvenience in the world already. "War is a terrible thing; but so is peace," he says. More babies might have birth defects after a nuclear war, but four per cent of babies have birth defects anyway. Whether we can tolerate a slightly higher percentage of defective children is a question of trade-offs. "It might well turn out," Kahn suggests, "that U.S. decision makers would be willing, among other things, to accept the high risk of an additional one percent of our children being born deformed *if that meant not giving up Europe to Soviet Russia.*"

The book proposes a system for labelling contaminated food so that older people will eat the food that is more radioactive, on the theory that "most of these people would die of other causes before they got cancer." It advocates providing citizens with hand-held radium dosimeters, which will allow them to measure the radioactivity their own bodies have absorbed. One symptom of radioactive poisoning is nausea, Kahn explains, and, when one person vomits, people around him will start to vomit, convinced that they are dying. If the dosimeter indicates that no one has received more than an acceptable dose of radiation, everyone can stop throwing up and get back to work reconstructing the economy. Kahn dismisses the notion that a society that has just suffered the obliteration of its cities, the contamination of its soil and water, and the massacre of a large portion of its population might lack the civic virtue and moral fibre necessary to rebuild. "It is my belief that if the government has made at least moderate prewar preparations, so that most people whose lives have been saved will give some credit to the government's foresight, then people will probably rally round," he writes. "It would not surprise me if the overwhelming majority of the survivors devoted themselves with a somewhat fanatic intensity to the task of rebuilding what was destroyed." The message of the book seemed to be that thermonuclear war will be terrible but we'll get over it.

"Kahn's specialty was to express the RAND conventional wisdom in the most provocative and outrageous fashion imaginable," Fred Kaplan says in his excellent history of the Cold War defense intellectuals, "The Wizards of Armageddon" (1983). This is true, except that, unlike most of the defense establishment in the nineteen-fifties, Kahn was an early advocate of civil defense. He was the champion salesman of the fallout shelter, and was especially excited by the potential of mineshafts as evacuation centers. He produced plans for building shelters in the rock below Manhattan, estimating that "very high-quality" shelter spaces could be constructed there for between five hundred and nine hundred dollars apiece. But—and this is the strange logic of deterrence—the essential purpose of investing billions in civil defense was not to save lives but to enhance the credibility of America's nuclear threat. "Any power that can evacuate a high percentage of its urban population to protection is in a much better position to bargain than one which cannot do this," Kahn explains in "On Thermonuclear War." He contemplated the possiblity of several mass evacuations every decade in order to bolster American credibility. Having more shelters than the Soviets is like having more missiles: it is another way of saying, Go ahead, make our day. We can take your nuclear hit and come right back at you. The United States could not afford a mineshaft gap.

RAND was leery of civil defense for client-relations reasons: money spent on fallout shelters and dosimeters was less money for the Air Force. Eisenhower, too, opposed civil-defense programs, in part because he didn't think that nuclear war was survivable, and in part because he was a cheapskate. Facilities for the evacuation of millions cost too much to construct. In the nineteen-fifties, the people who were enthusiastic about fallout shelters and evacuation drills, the now derided emblems of Cold War domestic culture, were liberals. All of the hundred million black-and-yellow fallout-shelter signs that appeared in the United States during the Cold War were put up by the Kennedy Administration—which also made Kahn happy by distributing two million dosimeters.

In its first three months, "On Thermonuclear War" sold more than fourteen thousand copies. The book received praise from a few prominent disarmament advocates and pacifists: A. J. Muste, Bertrand Russell, and the historian and senatorial candidate H. Stuart Hughes, who called it "one of the great works of our time." They thought that, by making nuclear exchange seem not only possible but nearly unavoidable, Kahn had, intentionally or not, presented a case for disarmament. Not only pacifists believed this. "If I wanted to convince a skeptic that there is no security in the balance of terror which American policy is committed to maintaining, I would send him to the works of Herman Kahn far sooner than to the writings of the unilateralists and the nuclear pacifists," Norman Podhoretz later wrote.

Other reactions were more predictable. *The National Review* thought that the book was not hard enough on Communism. *New Statesman* called it "pornography for officers." The *Daily Worker* called it "useful." In *Scientific American*, James R. Newman, the editor of the popular anthology "The World of Mathematics," said that it was "a moral tract on mass murder: how to plan it, how to commit it, how to get away with it, how to justify it." Though Kahn's book is an assault on the overwhelming-force mentality of Dulles and the generals at the Strategic Air Command (who, Kahn once told them, dreamed of a "wargasm"), it is also an attack on the anti-nuclear movement and the belief that nuclear war means the end of life as we know it. Most anti-nuclear advocates thought that arguing that a nuclear war was winnable only made one more likely. An official of the American Friends Service Committee compared Kahn to Adolf Eichmann, and he became one of the movement's favorite monsters. His house was picketed.

The best-known response to "On Thermonuclear War" was a movie. Stanley Kubrick began reading intensively on nuclear strategy soon after he finished directing "Lolita," in 1962. His original plan was to make a realistic thriller. One of his working titles was taken from an article by Wohlstetter in *Foreign Affairs*, in 1959: "The Delicate Balance of Terror" (an article that anticipated many of Kahn's arguments in "On Thermonuclear War"). But Kubrick could not invent a plausible story in which a nuclear war is started by accident, so he ended up making a comedy, adapted from a novel, by a former R.A.F. officer, called "Red Alert."

"The movie could very easily have been written by Herman Kahn himself," Midge Decter wrote in *Commentary* when "Dr. Strangelove" came out, in 1964. This was truer than she may have known. Kubrick was steeped in "On Thermonuclear War"; he made his producer read it when they were planning the movie. Kubrick and Kahn met several times to discuss nuclear strategy, and it was from "On Thermonuclear War" that Kubrick got the term "Doomsday Machine." The Doomsday Machine—a device that automatically decimates the planet once a nuclear attack is made—was one of Kahn's heuristic fictions. (The name was his own, but he got the idea from "Red Alert," which he, too, had admired.) In Kahn's book, the Doomsday Machine is an example of the sort of deterrent that appeals to the military mind but that is dangerously destabilizing. Since nations are not suicidal, its only use is to threaten. "The whole point of the Doomsday Machine is lost if you keep it a secret!" as Strangelove complains to the Soviet Ambassador.

There were a number of possible models for the character of Strangelove (who at one point tells the President about a report on Doomsday Machines prepared by the Bland Corporation): Wernher von Braun, Teller, even Henry Kissinger, who was an admirer of "On Thermonuclear War," and whose book "Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy" (1957) pondered the possibility of tactical nuclear wars. Peter Sellers picked up the accent from the photographer Arthur Fellig, known as Weegee, when he was visiting the studio to advise Kubrick on cinematographic matters. But one source was Kahn. Strangelove's rhapsodic monologue about preserving specimens of the race in deep mineshafts is an only slightly parodic version of Kahn. There were so many lines from "On Thermonuclear War" in the movie, in fact, that Kahn complained that he should get royalties. ("It doesn't work that way," Kubrick told him.) Kahn received something more lasting than money, of course. He got himself pinned in people's minds to the figure of Dr. Strangelove, and he bore the mark of that association forever.

Kubrick's plan to make a comedy about nuclear war didn't bother Kahn. He thought that humor was a good way to get people thinking about a subject too frightening to contemplate otherwise, and although his colleagues rebuked him for it—"Levity is never legitimate," Brodie told him—he used jokes in his lectures. Mordancy was his usual mode; Ghamari-Tabrizi compares him at one point to Charles Addams. "One way not to make a reputation is to find a hole in the air-defense system," he would tell audiences. "It's all holes." Explaining the assumptions he made about people when he discussed the prospects for postwar recovery: "We assumed that they are the same kind of slobs postwar that they were prewar." On what everyone will eat in the fallout shelters: "I personally intend to live with the chef at Lindy's who really understands sour cream herring and other quite storable delicacies."

Ghamari-Tabrizi has some enterprising pages comparing this sort of ob-la-di, ob-la-da banter with the satire of contemporaries like Mort Sahl and Jules Feiffer, and with the sick humor of Lenny Bruce and *Mad*. This is one of the places, though, where she seems to be reaching. (She doesn't mention it, but Kahn was a target of one of Sahl's routines: "He is a fascist . . . a genocide who goes home at night and plays with his kids and asks them, 'What are you going to be *if* you grow up?' ") Kahn was the opposite of a satirist. He was a believer. Questioning military policy was his business; questioning the policies that military policy is designed to protect and enable was not. For all the avant-gardism, all the high-powered analytic techniques and "thinking outside the box," Kahn's work was funda-

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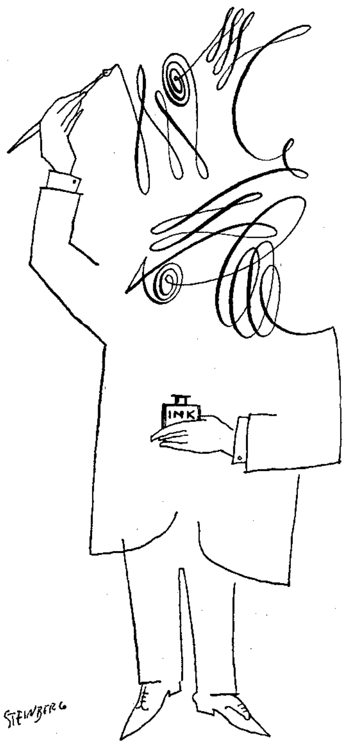

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THE PROBLEM OF DESCRIBING TREES

The aspen glitters in the wind.
And that delights us.

The leaf flutters, turning,
Because that motion in the heat of summer
Protects its cells from drying out. Likewise the leaf
Of the cottonwood.

The gene pool threw up a wobbly stem
And the tree danced. No.
The tree capitalized.
No. There are limits to saying,
In language, what the tree did.

It is good sometimes for poetry to disenchant us.

Dance with me, dancer. Oh, I will.

Aspens doing something in the wind.

—*Robert Hass*

mentally in the service of preserving the system, and without cynicism. In this, he was like most of the Cold War defense intellectuals. The attitude was: We are trained scientists. We've studied the situation with detachment and disinterestedness; we have taken nothing for granted, given no hostages to sentiment. And we conclude that the world as it is—in this case, a global rivalry between two nuclear powers in an escalating arms race—is acceptable (provided that the policy changes we recommend are adopted).

“On Thermonuclear War” is a preposterous monument to this way of thinking. Complications and qualifications are swatted away like flies. “I will tend to ignore, or at least underemphasize, what many people might consider the most important result of a war—the overall suffering induced by ten thousand years of postwar environment,” Kahn writes at one point. He addresses anxieties about the effects of fallout by analyzing three radioactive isotopes, noting, almost incidentally, that there are about two hundred other isotopes in fallout, which he does not discuss. His margins of error can be staggering. Sentences like this are not uncommon (in a discussion of defective genes): “Given the uncertainties, the problem could conceivably be five times better or worse.”

A good deal of Kahn's speculation about nuclear scenarios was based on information from Air Force intelligence, which is the only classified intelligence RAND had access to, and which, not surprisingly, habitually overestimated Soviet strength. The widespread panic about a missile gap was an artifact of this bias. In 1958, RAND estimated that the Soviets had three hundred intercontinental ballistic missiles; in fact, even in 1961, the year John Kennedy became President, after a campaign accusing Eisenhower of letting the United States fall behind in the arms race, the Soviet Union had only four missiles in its arsenal. But Kahn didn't know this. It's not clear, really, how much he did know and how much was speculation and hortatory display. Ghamari-Tabrizi interviewed a number of Kahn's associates, and she includes a telling comment about what it was like to work with him. “Nothing was ever finished,” Irwin Mann, a mathematician, told her. “It was terribly sloppy. It was an enormous myth that anything was studied. Nothing was studied. Not really. He didn't study anything. He was enormously smart.”

Critics like Newman complained that what is missing from Kahn's work is a moral sense. Kahn had a reply to this objection, which was that the insistence that nuclear war is immoral will never prevent nuclear war. What is missing from his analysis is not morality; it's reality. The reason his scenarios are fantastic to the point, almost, of risibility is that they deliberately ignore all the elements—beliefs, customs, ideas, politics—that actual wars are fought about, and that operate as a drag on decision-making at every point. Kahn was writing during the Khrushchev period, after Sputnik and during the Berlin crisis, when levels of Soviet bellicosity were high. But even if Soviet behavior had been more pacific his analysis would have been the same, for his methodology, the RAND methodology, required him to posit an eternally and implacably hostile enemy. In strategic thinking, you have to assume the worst of your opponent, and to assume that your opponent assumes the worst of you. To believe less is to make yourself vulnerable to bluffing. In Kahn's world, the adversary is always, as he put it, “bright, knowledgeable, and malevolent.”

This is what the historian Peter Galison has called the Cold War “ontology of the enemy”—the image of the adversary as a “cold-blooded, machinelike opponent . . . a mechanized Enemy Other.” The machine does not have ideals or values, issues on which it might compromise or goals that might encompass something other than its own aggrandizement. It wants only to win, and every move it makes is a move in that game. It's a short step from this abstraction to the domino theory, the belief that Communist expansion is an inexorable and practically mindless force. One of the ironies of the Cold War is that the RAND intellectuals, highbrow hardliners who enjoyed relatively little influence when Eisenhower was President, got their reward when Kennedy came into office. Robert McNamara welcomed them into the Defense Department, where, the best and the brightest, they applied their methods to the interesting problem of Vietnam. One of them was Daniel Ellsberg.

By then, Kahn had left RAND. He moved to Chappaqua, New York, and, in 1961, founded the Hudson Institute—“a high-class RAND,” he called it. Consultants included the sociologist Daniel Bell, the French political philosopher Raymond Aron, and the novelist Ralph Ellison. William Gaddis was engaged to

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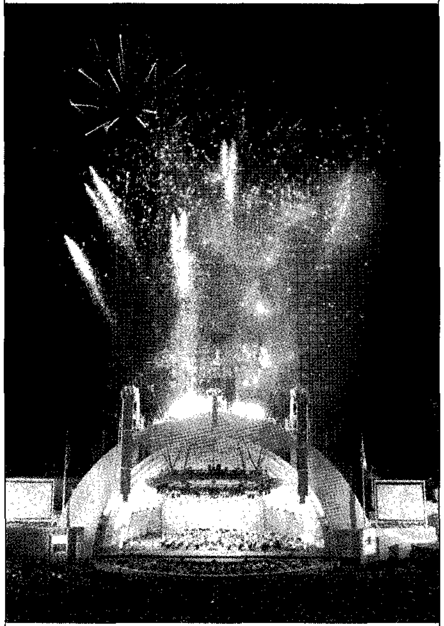

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LAPHIL PRESENTS

help with the writing. Kahn liked debate, but the ad-hominem attacks on "On Thermonuclear War" had bruised him, and he softened his tone. He published a response to critics, "Thinking About the Unthinkable," in 1962, and another book on military strategy, "On Escalation," in 1965. He was a consultant to the Defense Department from 1966 to 1968, criticizing the government for announcing its willingness to negotiate with the North Vietnamese, and advising "a sharp, potentially uncontrollable increase in threat, which might raise anxiety about points of no return." He couldn't understand bombing North Vietnam unless it made life unbearable for the enemy. But he looked for an exit strategy, and he claimed to have introduced the term "Vietnamization" to the Nixon Administration, which adopted it as the path to "peace with honor." It sounded better, Kahn later explained, than "de-Americanization."

In the nineteen-seventies, Kahn became a dealer in the futurology business—the fascination (prevalent at a time when the present day did not bear much examination) with imaginary Armageddons and pots of gold over the rainbow. In Kahn's case, it was all pots of gold. He devoted his institute's resources to refuting popular apocalyptic scenarios like Paul Ehrlich's "The Population Bomb" (1968) and the Club of Rome's "Limits to Growth" (1972). He argued that the potential of capitalism and technology was boundless, and predicted that human beings would colonize the solar system (an unbeatable type of deterrence: you threaten us, we'll evacuate to the moon). His politics went right. "The Coming Boom: Economic, Political, and Social" (1982) is a hymn to Reaganism. In his last book, an update of "Thinking About the Unthinkable," he charged Jonathan Schell with exaggerating the effects of a nuclear war in his best-selling "The Fate of the Earth" (1982). Kahn died, of a massive stroke, in 1983. That was the year a group headed by Carl Sagan released a report warning that the dust and smoke generated by a thermonuclear war would create a "nuclear winter," blocking light from the sun and wiping out most of life on the planet. Kahn's friends were confident that he would have had a rebuttal.

Did the defense intellectuals of the nineteen-fifties, in their efforts to calculate ways of preventing nuclear war, actually push the hands of the clock closer to midnight? Part of the difficulty in answering this is that, at the time, no one really knew where midnight was. Most of the thinking and writing of the period was carried out in a haze of ignorance, misinformation, and deliberate exaggeration. The early Cold Warriors—people like Dean Acheson, Paul Nitze, and the members of the Committee on the Present Danger—were at least as worried about American attitudes as they were about Soviet intentions. Obsessed with preparedness, they sometimes did not scruple about overstating the threat for which preparation was necessary. They practiced psychological warfare on their own people. Strategists like Kahn and Wohlstetter abetted this politics not by inflating the facts but by doing what they thought it was their job to do: thinking down the road, around the next technological and geopolitical bend. They wrote about things like hardening bomber bases and missile silos long before the Soviets had any ability to land warheads on targets that small. They were not responsible for starting the arms race, but the more they speculated on the unknown terrors of the future, the faster the race was run. The bomber gap, the missile gap, the mineshaft gap: RAND flourished on gaps. So did the armed services and the weapons manufacturers. When Eisenhower, in his farewell address, warned of "the military-industrial complex," this was the intersection of mutually reinforcing interests he had in mind.

What drove the Cold War, though, was not business or science. It was the factor that is supposedly bracketed off in systems analysis: politics—the opportunities for partisan gain made available by gesturing toward the ubiquitous shadow of an overwhelming emergency. And the manipulation was not all on one side. If the United States assigned the Soviets the role of mechanized Enemy Other, the Soviets did their best to play it. The occasional hyperbole of the Committee on the Present Danger was nothing compared with the bluster of Khrushchev and Gromyko, men who had their own domestic constituencies to worry about. It served both sides in the Cold War to take each other's rhetoric at face value. We have yet to learn how not to do this. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

The Historian, *by Elizabeth Kostova (Little, Brown; $25.95).* In this smart retelling of the Dracula story, a young girl's discovery of a mysterious book, blank save for a sinister woodcut of a dragon, impels her father to divulge, reluctantly, details of his vampire-hunting days back in grad school. Halfway through his tale, which is told over several sessions in various atmospheric European locations, he vanishes. His daughter's quest to find him is interwoven with letters that reveal the past in full. Kostova's knowledge of occult arcana is impressive, and she packages her erudition in a graceful narrative that only occasionally lapses into melodrama. The structure—a story within a letter within a flashback—is an innovative complication, but it is soon shaken off by the swift-moving plot. Kostova never strays far from the conventions of the genre, and her historical thriller feels somewhat indebted to best-sellers of the recent past; there are Christian heresies, scholarly sleuths, and a malaprop-prone Eastern European guide.

The Closed Circle, *by Jonathan Coe (Knopf; $25).* In this sequel to "The Rotters' Club," Paul Trotter wonders, "What sort of country are we living in?" One much changed, Coe is at constant pains to point out, in the twenty-six years since the story began, in nineteen-seventies Birmingham. There are cappuccinos in every café and mobile phones on every ear. The characters, however, remain largely the same. Last seen as a twelve-year-old Thatcherite, Paul is now one of New Labour's rising stars. His older brother Benjamin, the soulful literary aspirant whose concerns drove the first installment, remains obsessed with the school prima donna, whom no one has seen in the intervening years. Others in their group have settled into the usual midlife surprises and disappointments. Coe's knack for capturing an epoch is still strong, but, in contrast to the distant decade of the earlier book, his evocation of turn-of-the-millennium Britain seems very much yesterday's news.

The Survivor: Bill Clinton in the White House, *by John F. Harris (Random House; $29.95).* First drafts of history are only as good as their informants; those interviewed here are thoughtfully candid and often anonymous. ("The closer people were to Clinton," Harris claims, "the more voluble they were as sources.") The product is neither a redemption nor a denunciation but a more measured portrait, and one that complicates the popular narrative of squandered opportunity. Clinton emerges as a gifted President, but one whose tendencies toward passivity and procrastination meant that he maneuvered best from an adversarial crouch. "One irony of this tension, as it played out over eight years, is that Clinton in the end proved to be a more effective and more consequential president during those times when he was disciplined by political caution," Harris concludes. "Many of his largest achievements," from balancing the budget to overhauling welfare, "had a defensive character."

Crossworld, *by Marc Romano (Broadway; $24.95).* Sixty-four million people do at least one crossword a week. This book, a memoir chronicling Romano's yearlong immersion in the world of competitive crossword puzzles, is written for those who do them religiously. Sketching the history of crosswords, Romano explains that this kind of wordplay has been around since the ancient Greeks created word squares, but the game itself was invented by an American newspaperman in 1913. Romano enters the subculture of the game's hardcore enthusiasts and attends the American Crossword Puzzle Tournament. He provides tips for puzzlers and insights into a crossword's construction. Ultimately, the book is a celebration of an addiction. For Romano, a crossword puzzle isn't just a game: "Solving puzzles is an active step you can take to make yourself a better, more informed, fairer, and more tolerant person."

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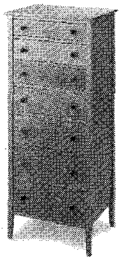

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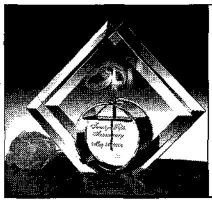

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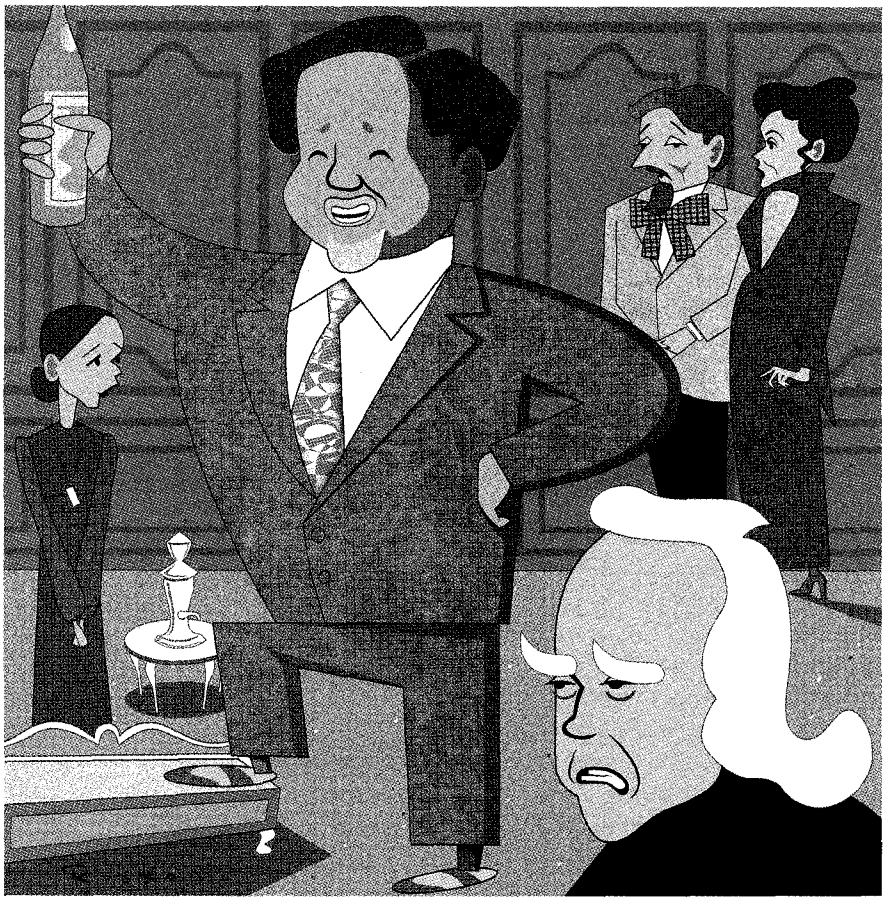

An old-fashioned "Cherry Orchard," full of male bombast and female fluttering.

Of all the modernist playwrights whose work is still performed in repertory, Anton Chekhov is generally considered the most modern. In his five best-known plays—all written between 1887 and 1903—the winds of change are never gentle; they mercilessly expose the avaricious behavior of the newly moneyed, who grab at Russia's dawning industrial age like greedy children at the golden straw. And, of course, it is that greed—which Chekhov knew a great deal about, having had to support his cruel merchant father and other loutish family members for much of his adult life—that accounts for the "drama" in his plays, which are rarely dramatic. That is, the drama that Chekhov presents to us is an undercurrent of emotion and intention; he leaves it to the director, the cast, and the audience to draw that current to the surface, to find the play's meaning in their own interpretations of the action. In this way, Chekhov presaged much of today's more adventurous theatre; he crafted his plays as events, "happenings," in which his characters' interactions were more or less unchoreographed. (Some seasons back, the avant-garde director Elizabeth LeCompte and her admirable company the Wooster Group used Chekhov's "Three Sisters" as a jumping-off point from which to dissect the nature of performance in general.)

As it happens, Chekhov was quite aware that he was up to something new when he stopped writing the short "vaudevilles," or sketches, he initially became known for. In an 1887 letter to his oldest brother, who longed to be a writer, too, Chekhov wrote, of his first full-length drama, "Ivanov," "Modern playwrights begin their plays with angels, scoundrels and clowns exclusively. . . . I wanted to be original: I did not portray a single villain not a single angel (though I could not refrain when it came to the clown), did not accuse anyone, or exculpate. Whether this is well done, I do not know." This is modernism in both thought and action: Chekhov is unsure whether he has created a new form while being absolutely sure that new forms are what artists should create. To that end, he was fortunate to be matched in his daring by his director Konstantin Stanislavsky, who worked with actors and text in a way that was intended to make theatre an organic, realistic whole—no longer a place for "angels."

It's odd to consider all this in light of the strange and inconsequential version of Chekhov's last play, "The Cherry Orchard," currently on view at the Atlantic Theatre Company. As directed by Scott Zigler, from an adaptation by Tom Donaghy, the production is far from modern. Instead, Zigler has put together a stiltedly old-fashioned show, full of male bombast and female fluttering, with every moment of silence taken up by mugging or sight gags. And while Zigler has cast the show with a number of adults—including the fine film actress Brooke Adams—it is ultimately a high-school production, amateurish and gleaming with anxious, doomed hope.

At the play's start, Madame Ranevskaya (Adams) returns from Paris, where she has survived a disastrous love affair, to her family's estate in the Russian countryside, accompanied by her daughter Anya (Laura Breckenridge). There are many family retainers there to greet the two women, including Ranevskaya's adopted daughter, Varya (Diana Ruppe), who is also the estate's majordomo—a role that gives Ruppe the opportunity to wear black and look perpetually pained. Assembling in the family nursery, Ranevskaya and her brother Leonid (Larry Bryggman) begin their customary trip down memory lane—a journey that holds more charm for them than any movement forward, beyond their own solipsism.

As they reach for the past, they ignore

the future, which appears in the form of Lopakhin (Isiah Whitlock, Jr.), a local businessman, who dresses like a carpetbagger and whose roots lie in the peasantry. While Ranevskaya tries to remind Lopakhin of the time they spent together as children, he's much more interested in what he can see now: the impending sale of the estate and its beautiful cherry orchard, which the family's financial carelessness has rendered inevitable. Unlike the other characters in the play, Lopakhin is a man of action; he is none too respectful of the family's genteel stasis. Why can't Ranevskaya or her brother hear Lopakhin as he keeps warning the family about the sale? Because, as Chekhov implies, none of us understand, let alone hear, others, particularly if those others truly *are* other. Lopakhin is from a different class than Ranevskaya; the dust clouds of realism he raises settle in the teacups that she and her kind drink from as they sink further and further into their wistful dreams. When, at the close of the play, the estate is finally sold and Ranevskaya bids adieu to her family ghosts, which take the shape of falling cherry blossoms, we know—Chekhov means us to know—that she is still in their thrall. The loss of her home has simply provided her with one more object of nostalgia.

None of this is made particularly clear in this production. As a whole, the actors are so poorly directed that their performances amount to a form of camp. Adams makes a gallant effort to project dignity and a kind of tarnished grace, but she is weighed down by the other members of the cast, who play their parts in quotation marks. Whitlock "booms." The lovely Pepper Binkley, as the girlish maid Dunyasha, "twinkles." Bryggman "cuts up." The choices that Zigler and Donaghy have made here almost entirely undermine Chekhov's enduring capacity to surprise.

As the always right and very honorable Mrs. Culver in the splendid revival of W. Somerset Maugham's 1926 drawing-room comedy "The Constant Wife" (a Roundabout Theatre Company production at the American Airlines Theatre), Lynn Redgrave makes two striking entrances; for each, she wears a dramatic veil. Naturally, after a career of stage, television, and film appearances which spans more than forty years, Redgrave knows something about entrances, exits, and costuming. And she uses that experience, along with her intelligence and imagination, to superb effect here.

When, at the start of the play, we first see Mrs. Culver, sitting in the elegant London drawing room of her older daughter, Constance Middleton (Kate Burton), we know immediately who she is: a woman who is not afraid to speak her mind, and who does so with élan. Unlike Mrs. Culver, however, her self-righteous younger daughter, Martha (Enid Graham), is a teller of truths of the most plebeian kind. For instance, does Mrs. Culver know, Martha asks, that John (Michael Cumpsty), Constance's doctor husband of fifteen years, is having an affair with Marie-Louise (Kathryn Meisle), Constance's mate for all things shopping? But Mrs. Culver pays no mind. Before the wheels of gossip can even start turning, she reminds Martha, "Of course, truth is an excellent thing, but before one tells it one should be quite sure that one does so for the advantage of the person who hears it rather than one's own self-satisfaction."

Mrs. Culver is not alone in her cleverness. Constance is her near match when it comes to keeping an ironic distance from matters of the heart. Nevertheless, Constance's decision to condone *l'affaire* John and Marie-Louise takes even her mother by surprise. It has been many years since she and John were truly in love, Constance explains. She is his wife, and he has supported her, so why should she not support his needs? But that's not the end of the story—not entirely. It is Constance's development from wife to independent woman that gives the play its drama, such as it is. "The Constant Wife" is Oscar Wilde lite—"An Ideal Husband" crossed with barely digested suffragist ideology. But no matter. Everything about this production is such a pleasure—from Allen Moyer's set design and Michael Krass's costumes to Mark Brokaw's impeccable direction—that the hackneyed plot and loopy logic barely register. None of it would have worked, of course, if Brokaw hadn't assembled such an extraordinary cast. Burton and Redgrave bring such verve to their work that one is reminded of what is missing from so many of today's performances: the ability to play, and to enjoy it. ♦

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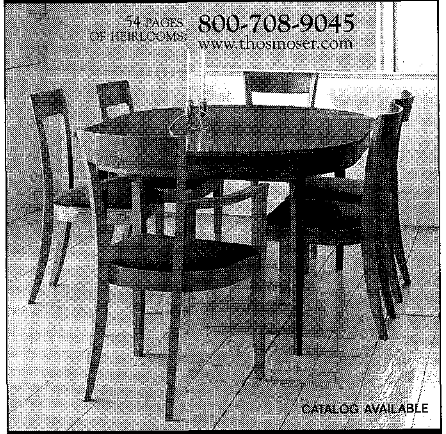

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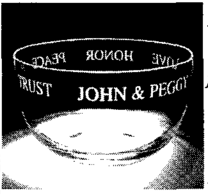

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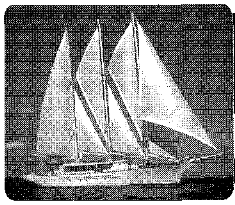

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MUSICAL EVENTS

SOUND AND VISION

Glass's "Koyaanisqatsi" and the art of film scoring.

BY ALEX ROSS

Some of the most compelling film music of the past year appeared not on the big screen but on the small one. Michael Giacchino's score for the TV show "Lost"—the tale of several dozen plane-crash survivors marooned on a vaguely supernatural, "Tempest"-like island—has unsettled millions of American viewers with an eerie array of orchestral sounds: fluttery four-note figures, shivery tones produced by bowing strings near the bridge, nasty glissandos on the trombone, and, at moments of maximum tension, a low plucked note on the harp. According to convention, harps are called upon to herald angels or other vessels of goodness. Giacchino makes the instrument gaunt and deathly, much as Mahler did in the last song of "Das Lied von der Erde." In general, Giacchino has done such a bang-up job of generating menace that the scriptwriters may have a hard time satisfying the expectations that he has created. Something mighty grim will have to crawl out of that lush jungle in order to justify those twangs of terror.

Composers usually enter the filmmaking process late in the game. They're given a few weeks to add music to the mix, often under strict instructions as to mood and style; they're essentially applying a finishing coat of aural stimulus. But music can do much more than echo the action on the screen. It can evoke hidden lives, unknown destinies, unseen histories, forgotten voices. The greatest filmmakers have all understood the complicating significance of music, and one measure of their greatness is their willingness to delegate power to composers. When Eisenstein made "Alexander Nevsky" and "Ivan the Terrible," he had Prokofiev as his house composer, and he would sometimes wait until Prokofiev had finished a certain segment before filming the corresponding scene. He wanted to chain the camera to the notes. Orson Welles followed Eisenstein's practice on "Citizen Kane," hiring the young New York composer Bernard Herrmann. For the final sequence of the film, which shows the destruction of Rosebud in the fireplace of Kane's castle, Welles had Herrmann's cue playing on the set. He later said that the score was fifty per cent responsible for the film's success.

Music can take control of the image; it can also suggest a world separate from the image, or expose the image as a lie. Shortly after sound came in, Eisenstein and other Soviet directors wrote a manifesto declaring that soundtracks should create "sharp discord" with the visual dimension, in order to cultivate critical thinking on the part of the audience. (That's not quite what Stalin had in mind, of course.) One early illustration of the practice was Shostakovich's 1929 score for "The New Babylon," a story of the Paris Commune. At the end, when the Communards are killed by a firing squad, Shostakovich responds not with a tragic utterance but with a distorted version of Offenbach's Can-Can. Giacchino's music for "Lost," in its own non-Marxist way, plays this same game of estrangement. Dispatching the ghosts of Schoenberg, Xenakis, and other twentieth-century sonic terrorists into an island paradise, it touches on the universal modern suspicion that surfaces are not what they seem, that the center does not hold, that it ain't necessarily so.

When the images themselves are terrifying, music can bring about an even trickier reversal, providing ironic reassurance or genuine compassion. Stanley Kubrick's decision to play "We'll Meet Again" over a montage of nuclear annihilation at the end of "Dr. Strangelove" is one famous example; another is Oliver Stone's use of Barber's velvety "Adagio for Strings" over scenes of carnage in "Platoon." Harold Budd and Robin Guthrie, in their score for the new Gregg Araki film "Mysterious Skin," do something wholly unexpected: as a horrendous story of child abuse in a Kansas town unfolds, the music sways toward a state of irra-

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Glass: Scoring a film requires "observing accurately the distance between the image and the music." Photograph by Jonathan Becker.

tional bliss, as if to numb the pain. Music, in these cases, doesn't show the image as a lie; instead, it is itself the lie we tell ourselves in order to survive.

Lincoln Center's Great Performers series recently presented a mini-festival titled Sound Projections, in which live ensembles played alongside silent movies, both classic and modern. The series began with a vintage radical Soviet film, Vsevolod Pudovkin's "The End of St. Petersburg," for which Alfred Schnittke supplied a score in 1992. Pudovkin was one of the directors who had argued for freethinking musical narratives in film, and it was fitting that Schnittke, the master surrealist of late-twentieth-century music, should have subverted Pudovkin's story of the education of a Bolshevik hero with all manner of brooding ostinatos, kitschy digressions, and anarchic pileups of tunes. The Asko Ensemble gave a committed, demented performance. The Ensemble Intercontemporain, from Paris, one-upped them by presenting Benedict Mason's 1988 score "ChaplinOperas," a kaleidoscopic companion piece for three classic Chaplin silents. It's a dazzling, dizzying, ultimately wearying exercise in free association, as chaotic in technique as Chaplin's films are clean.

The Lincoln Center series culminated in a blast of Glass: "Koyaanisqatsi," "Powaqqatsi," and "Naqoyqatsi," a trilogy of documentary film fantasias conceived by Godfrey Reggio and scored by Philip Glass. (The live performances were courtesy of the Philip Glass Ensemble.) The titles are Hopi Indian words approximately meaning "life out of balance," "life in transformation," and "life as war": the aim is to see human civilization in its mundane entirety, without reference to politics, culture, or history. There is no

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dialogue or plot; scenes of high-tech American cities, poverty-stricken Third World streets, frenzied factories, and empty canyons unfold in dreamlike motion. The images are sometimes sped up and sometimes slowed down. Humanity comes off as an insectoid species, though not without certain redeeming features. Glass's trademark arpeggios and carved-in-granite chords generate a ritualistic, vaguely ancient air, circling back, time and again, to an abiding sadness.

"Koyaanisqatsi," which was shot during the nineteen-seventies and released in 1983, is the masterpiece in the series, and a singular event in film history. There is no more potent example of a score dominating a film. The relationship between filmmaker and composer extended Eisenstein's ideal to the *n*th degree: Glass watched the footage and wrote some music, Reggio and his editors listened to the music and reworked the footage, and the process went on until the appearance of fusion was total. In an interview that accompanies the "Koyaanisqatsi" DVD, Glass provides his own eloquent definition of the film-music art: he calls it "observing accurately the distance between the image and the music." In other words, instead of trying to make image and music serve the same ends, you play one against the other, letting the disparity become an emotional experience in itself.

Glass's solutions to the challenge of "Koyaanisqatsi" are riveting. The opening is famous and majestic: a deep bass voice chants the title phrase in monotone while an electric organ turns slow pinwheels above it. As the camera of Ron Fricke, the cinematographer, floats across immense Western landscapes, a flute plays a lonely figure in open intervals, perhaps in tribute to the prairie music of Copland; then the bass chant returns, sounding very much like a sad, angry god. A later sequence, devoted to various forms of transportation, dwells for a long time on slow-motion footage of a jumbo jet taxiing on a tarmac. Glass responds to this grungy image with music of exhilarating quickness and lightness, high female voices predominating. In later sections, Glass abandons his attitude of cosmic detachment and picks up the racing rhythms of Fricke's cinematography. To depict the decay and destruction of the Pruitt-Igoe housing complex, in St. Louis, the composer writes a monstrous neo-Baroque moto perpetuo, which, as the buildings fall, devolves into nothing more than descending scales. (This footage has become more haunting with time; Minoru Yamasaki, who designed Pruitt-Igoe, was also the architect of the World Trade Center.) During the twenty-minute frenzy titled "The Grid"—crowds swirling, traffic churning, televisions flickering, hot dogs and Hostess Twinkies being expurgitated from production lines—Glass and his musicians become manic machines, firing off notes like so many 0s and 1s. The distance between sound and image disappears, and the viewer is left with little space in which to think or breathe.

When I saw "Koyaanisqatsi" in college, I dismissed it as a trippy, slick, MTV-ish thing, to which some well-meaning soul had attached hippie messages about the mechanization of existence and the spoliation of the planet. At Lincoln Center, I understood it as something else altogether—an awesomely dispassionate vision of the human world, beautiful and awful in equal measure. What made the difference, apart from the fact that I was no longer a facile collegiate ironist, was the experience of hearing the music live, with Kurt Munkacsi's sound design adding heft and definition to every gesture. For all the deliberate coldness of some of Glass's writing, "Koyaanisqatsi" is deeply expressive; its blistering virtuosity is often the only sign of emotional life on display, excepting a few wan smiles on the faces of pedestrians who hurry through Times Square.

"Powaqqatsi" and "Naqoyqatsi," the sequels, don't match the force of the original, though they are absorbing throughout. Glass supplies many passages of cool, aching beauty, but the urgent side of his early style, the technique of eviscerating repetition, is diminished. As a whole, the trilogy mimics the uneven shape of the composer's career, which has ranged from achievements of staggering originality ("Music in Twelve Parts," "Einstein on the Beach," the Violin Concerto) to statements of baffling neutrality (a world-music cantata entitled "Orion" is the newest instance of the latter). These days, he often seems trapped in his formulas; he writes "Philip Glass music" in place of music that happens to be by Philip Glass. But he has won his place in history, and he may figure out a way to knock us sideways once again. ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

BEWILDERED

"Bewitched," "Me and You and Everyone We Know," "Yes."

BY ANTHONY LANE

What is the connection between the following titles: "Bewitched," "The Dukes of Hazzard," "Get Smart," "I Dream of Jeannie"? First, they are all current or forthcoming features on the movie schedule. Second, you cannot imagine yourself actually cranking up the physical desire to go and see any of them. Millions of us *will* see them, of course, thanks to that mysterious, lemminglike blend of hope, communal obligation, and cranial vacancy that sends us to any film nowadays, but will we take a seat with the same fizz of expectation that was fostered by the original shows on TV? In short, how do you solve a problem like Samantha?

Nicole Kidman as Samantha and Will Ferrell as Darrin in Nora Ephron's movie.

Elizabeth Montgomery was my first, least guilt-inducing, and most abiding idea of a deity. My worship was unique and without flaw, a sensation shared by no more than ten thousand people in the surrounding square mile. It took me years to tumble to her cunning trick: she struck a blow for women with her complete, nose-powered control of the male species, while at the same time calming the nerves of the patriarchs who presumed to run the broadcast corporations, and indeed the country, by using her illimitable powers to do no more than shape the perfect home. This was gingham feminism at its most perverse; it turned men into happy masochists, an assembly line of replaceable Darrins, yet left them with the illusion of command. You could read Samantha's gifts as subversion in deep disguise or as a smiling gesture to the radical—just enough to leave the status quo refreshed.

All of which was enough to lure Nora Ephron into a new movie version of "Bewitched." Here, Nicole Kidman plays Isabel Bigelow, an unattached witch—unless you count a cat as an attachment—who lands in Los Angeles with a plan to become normal. This is like moving to Munich to improve your sense of humor. Isabel's father, Nigel (Michael Caine), an around-the-clock rogue whose success with women seems strangely at odds with his tendency to wear silk cravats, condemns this foolish scheme. But Isabel's mind, for what it's worth, is made up. (She does act ditsy, to the point of brainlessness, at times, with breathy voice patterns downloaded from Marilyn Monroe.) Fortune smirks upon her when a famous actor named Jack Wyatt (Will Ferrell) spots her in a bookstore, nose at full wiggle, and casts her as Samantha in a new television remake of, yes, "Bewitched," with himself in the role of Darrin. A witch picked to play a witch! How cozy is that?

Ephron co-wrote the screenplay with her sister Delia, and you can understand their wish to try something different—to get away from the grim practice of the "Charlie's Angels" franchise, say, which stretched its slender material to twice the length of the TV show, only to realize that the Angels had been specifically devised to fill a shorter slot. Although Hollywood, which once went in terror of TV, now honors it as a prime natural resource, such adaptation is unnatural and doomed, which may explain why Ephron was so attracted to a show-within-a-show. The result is clever, and the narrative twistings keep you on your toes, but there's just one hitch: it ain't funny.

What this movie, like every other movie of the past decade, requires is Billy Wilder: a controller who knows no panic. As it is, Ephron's urge to play games with the Samantha myth sends her spinning into a dither. "This is very complex and unsettling, and I don't think I understand," Jack Wyatt wails, giving the game away. His character flips without warning between preening narcissist, lovebird, and man of wrath; some of these changes are wrought by Isabel's magic, with a deft tug on the earlobe, but others are purely random, and they push Will Ferrell into fugues of overacting. The part was reportedly slated for Jim Carrey, and you can see that itchy knowledge tugging at Ferrell's limbs and scrunching up his face. The biggest embarrassment is that Ephron lays into a man, Jack, for not letting a woman—the fetching Isabel—into the spotlight, and yet the whole movie, in allowing Ferrell to operate at maximum mug, falls into precisely the same trap. So who *would* make a decent Darrin? We know the fixings: a little slowness, a lot of chin 'n' grin, and a tendency to arrive at his own jokes thirty seconds after they leave his mouth. I hear Senator Kerry is none too busy these days.

He would certainly be good at standing to attention while Samantha stitched him up. Kidman looks the part, with her saucer eyes and swinging skirts, but the movie lets her down with a thump. Stepping into Montgomery's shoes is a thankless task, but Kidman comes across as preternaturally flustered by everything that heightened the serenity of her predecessor. She wants a man to be a "hopeless mess," whom she can tend and soothe without witchcraft, but why? Doesn't that make her even more old-fashioned than the first Samantha, who mostly cast her spells without compunction? There's a nice moment when Jack, at long last, discovers her dark arts—the arts of Isabel, that is, rather than Samantha. "Am I going to get pregnant?" he howls, as she brandishes her broomstick. But it's too late; the movie has long since disappeared up its own cauldron. Shirley MacLaine is stranded and wasted in the peachy part of Endora; Steve Carell puts in a spectral appearance as Uncle Arthur, the camp chorus from the original TV series, bereft of all logic here; and Michael Caine, who has been in many stinkers before and knows the signs, has the presence of mind to steal every scene in which he appears and leave the rest to rot. The Nora Ephron who wrote "When Harry Met Sally" and co-wrote "Sleepless in Seattle" had the wit to pin down her characters early on, before putting them through the comic mill of love and separation; this time, she is still trying to work out who, or what, the hell they are as the final credits roll. Up comes the old Police song "Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic." Not this time.

Beware films bearing Sundance awards. "Me and You and Everyone We Know," written and directed by Miranda July, won a Special Jury Prize at this year's festival for "Originality of Vision." That's one way of putting it. July also stars in the movie as Christine, a video artist who likes to train the camera on herself. Christine falls for a shoe salesman named Richard (John Hawkes), who has just separated from his wife. Their two boys live with him part of the week, spending hours on-line. One of them, a teen-ager, is used by a couple of underage girls as a test bed for their oral skills; the other, aged only six, blunders uncomprehendingly into Internet sex.

All of this is offered in the flat, affectless tone so beloved of independen directors (of whom Todd Solondz is the reigning lord), as if they were daring u to respond with shock and so betray ou reactionary souls. Well, I'll take the risk "Me and You" is not just creepy and unsavory at such moments, but pleased to be so. That's a shame, because elsewhere it loosens up, drops the art-schoo archness, and starts to scout the world for casual riches. There's a scene in which Richard and Christine walk along a street, and the camera gazes, with a tremor, at a sign saying "Ice Land" above their heads, against a backdrop o Hockney blue. It's the halfway mark o their stroll, although to Christine, who is fast turning into a bunny-boiler, it's so much more than that: "Ice Land is kind of like that point in a relationship when you suddenly realize it's not going to last forever." The loveliness is blown The image was enough, and another director, or a tougher editor, would have left it to hang fire. Still, I remember thinking much the same of "Sweetie," the early Jane Campion film, and look how she strode onward, leaving behind the willed kookiness, toward "The Piano"—her eyes as keen as ever, eager to observe not me and you and everyone we know but things of which we never even dreamed.

The latest Sally Potter film, called "Yes,"
Describes a love affair. I must confess
Her other work—"Orlando," starring Tilda
Swinton, so uptight I could have killed her,
And "The Tango Lesson"—left me numb.
This new film is a little warmer; some
Of the encounters rage and seethe. The scene
Is London, where Joan Allen (hail the queen
Of hauteur) plays an embryologist,
Married, lonely, miserable, and pissed.
She meets a chef (Simon Abkarian), who's cute,

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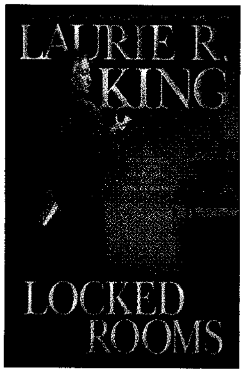

The first couple of sleuthing, Mary Russell and her husband, Sherlock Holmes, set sail for San Francisco and unravel a new mystery in Laurie R. King's latest book, "Locked Rooms."

Test your own sleuthing ability by entering the Laurie R. King Mystery Crossword Puzzle Contest in the July 4th issue of *The New Yorker*. The winner will embark on a mystery cruise for two!

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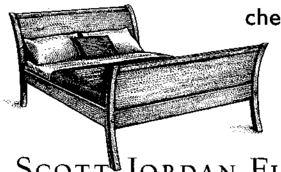

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Mustachioed, intense, *and* from Beirut.
They stroll beneath the blossom, get the hots,
Nuzzle close, and talk of apricots.
"You can taste her secret with your tongue":
So says our guy, to show he's really hung.
And that's the story. Not much else occurs.
He does a writhing dance. She moans and purrs.
Sam Neill, as her husband, stands and drinks
And fails to grasp a single thing she thinks.
By the end, we know what Potter hates:
Bigots, God, and the United States,
And Anglo-Saxon men in suits and ties
Who seem unable to control their flies.
And here's the hook: I guess it could be worse,
But—brace yourself—the whole damn thing's in verse.
Rhyming couplets, five-stress lines, the lot:
A Michael Bay production this is not.
"Do make yourself at home. Come; sit by me,
Something to drink? Perhaps you'd like some tea."
You may get off on this enthralling stuff,
But after half an hour I'd had enough.
I have a secret hunch that Potter knows
Her tale is skimpy; that is why she goes
For multiple dissolves, CCTV,
And endless slo-mo: all the devilry
That smart directors use to fill the time—
Think George Lucas, minus droids, plus rhyme.

I'd love to say I watched this film and cried
At witnessing the cultural divide
That Potter sees as wounding West and East;
I could have squeezed my Raisinets, at least.
As things stand, I came out more impressed—
Check out Joan Allen in a running vest,
Sweating those pentameters away—
Than moved by anything it had to say.
"Yes" is brave; I only wish its beauty
Didn't come with such a sense of duty.
It leaves you looking coldly down your nose
At movies where the people speak in prose.
(Should you want a Potter who will carry
The flag for British movies, bring on Harry.)
So just imagine all the table talk
These coming summer evenings in New York:
"Darling, 'Yes' is playing. We could go
And skip the 'O.C.' rerun. Shall we?" "No." ♦

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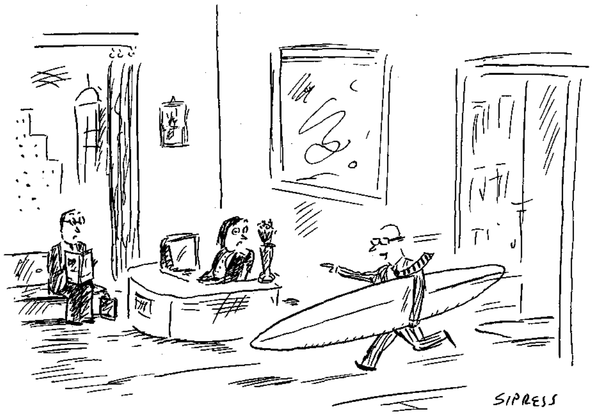
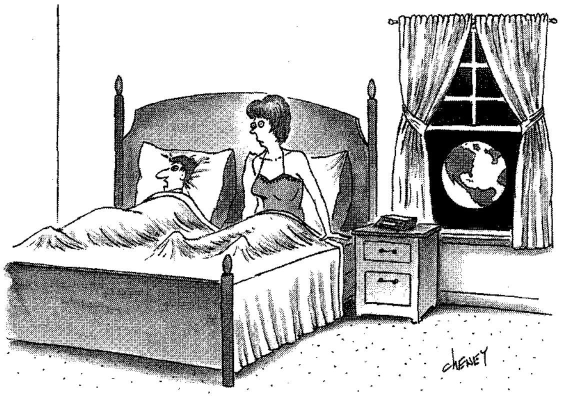
CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Alex Gregory, must be received by Sunday, June 26th. Finalists in the June 6th contest appear below; go online to vote. We will announce the winner, along with the finalists in this week's contest, in the July 11th & 18th issue. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon. Any U.S. resident age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.

WINNING CAPTION



"Tell my one-thirty things got way gnarly."
Eric Slade, Portland, Ore.



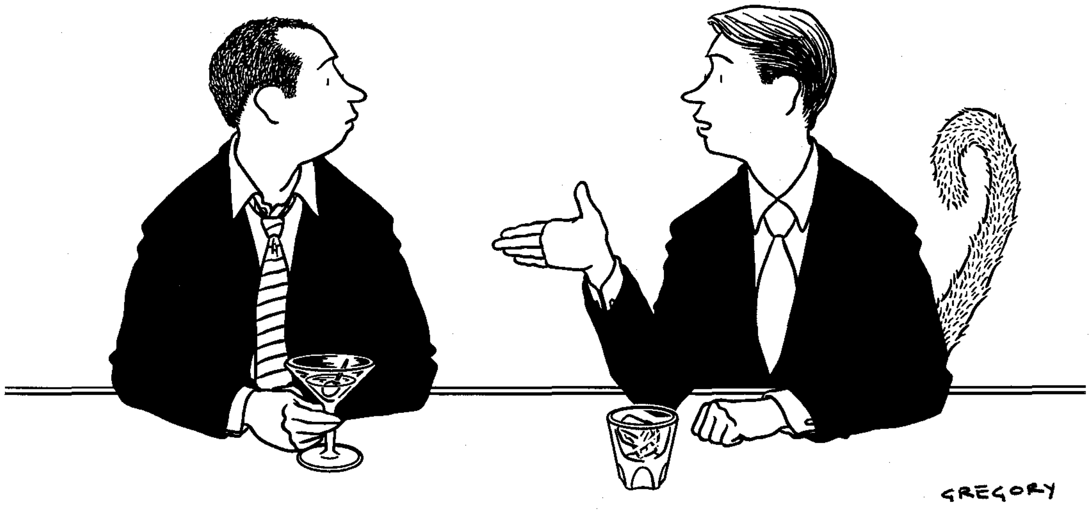
THE FINALISTS

"You always get like this when there's a full earth."
Lory Montgomery, Nashville, Tenn.

"It's just the wind."
Horace McCowan, Richmond, Va.

"Relax, honey—everybody gets buyer's remorse."
Anisha S. Dasgupta, New Haven, Conn.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



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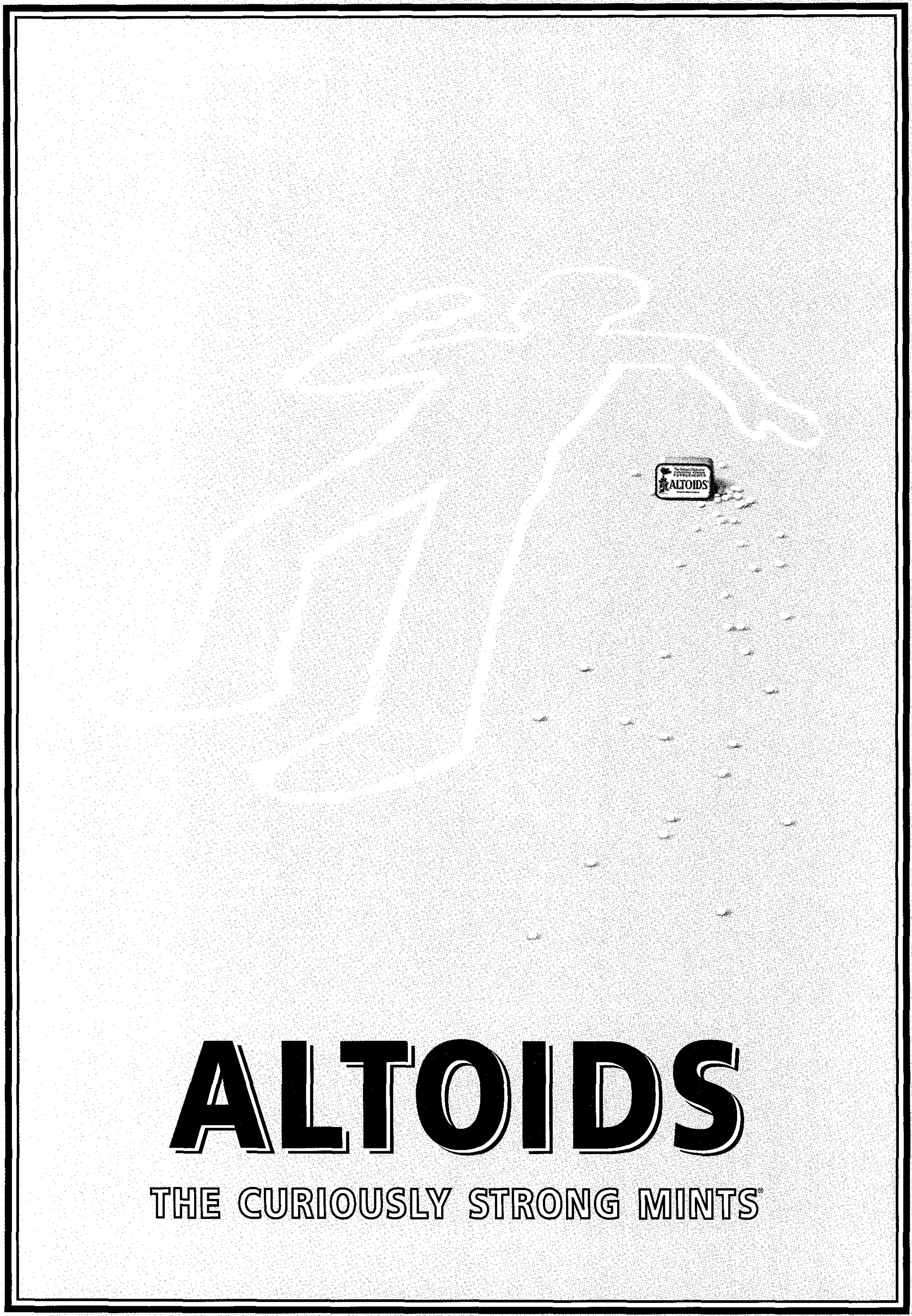
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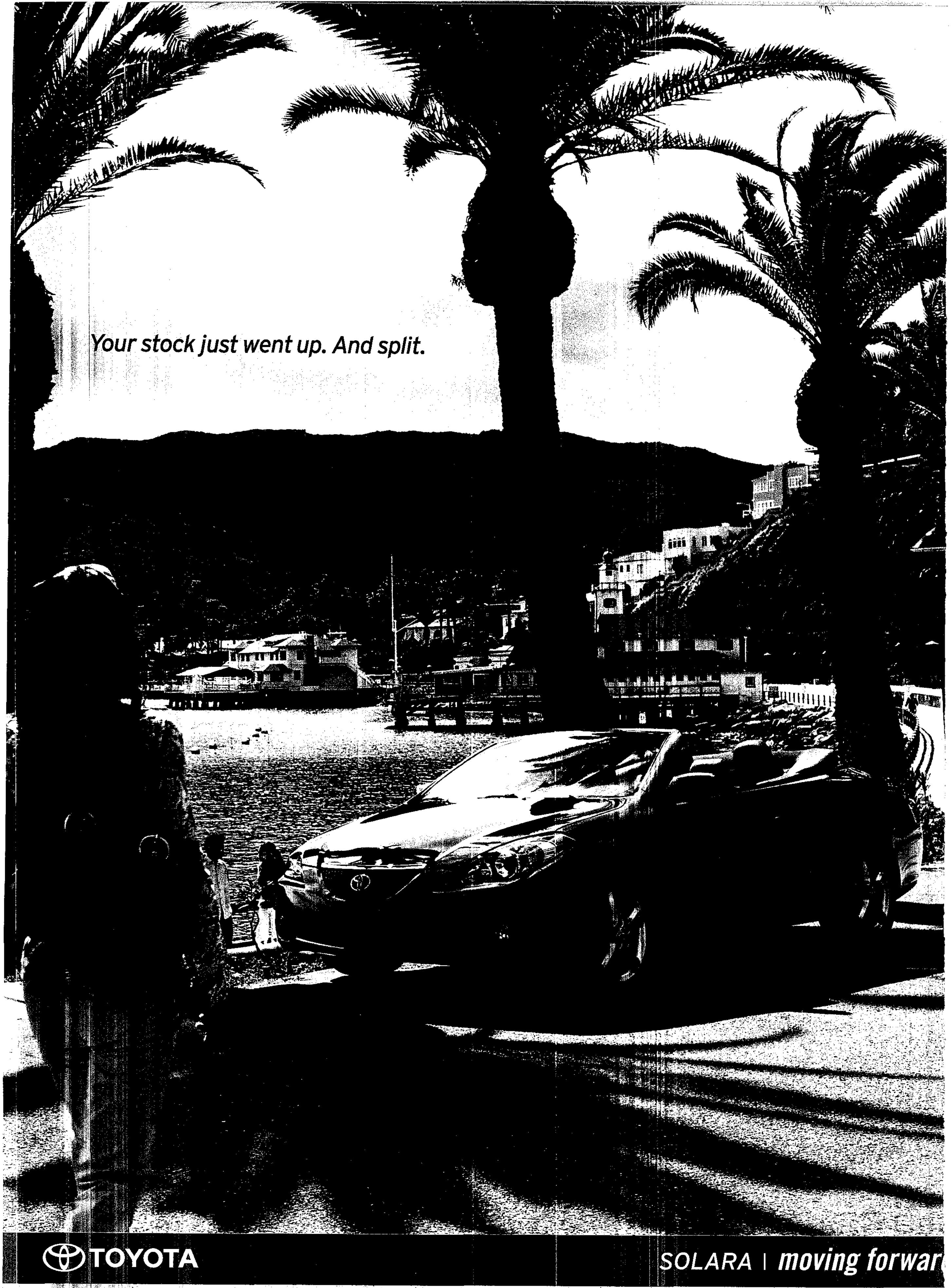
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